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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Who was C.L.R. James? • Why not Boutros-Ghali?

TAXI!

BLACKS, IMMIGRANTS AND THE MEANING OF WORK

BY STEPHEN GLASS

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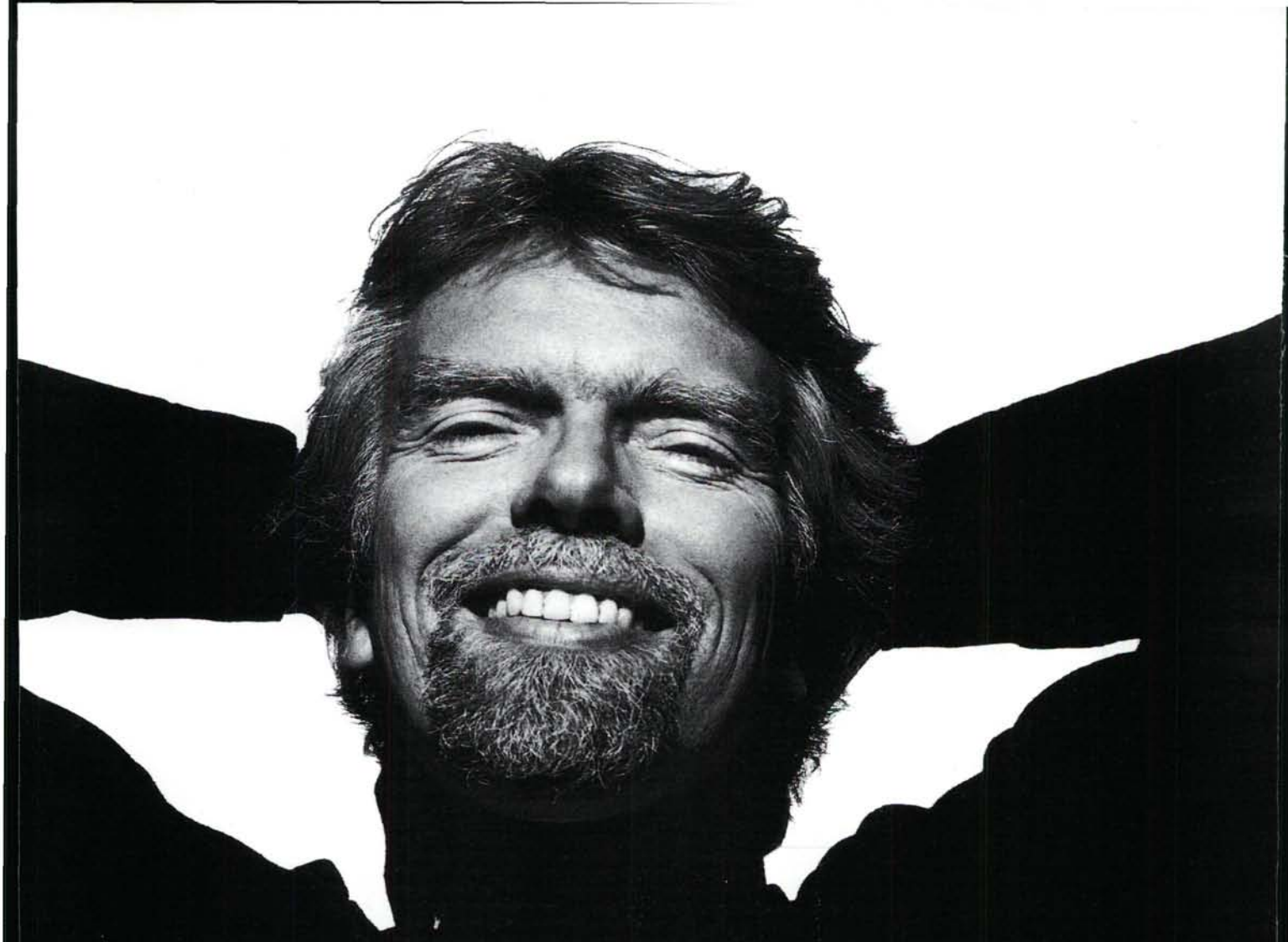

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

AUGUST 5, 1996

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CORRESPONDENCE

Debating Dr. Death

To the editors:

Stephanie Gutmann's piece on Dr. Jack Kevorkian ("Death and the Maiden," June 24) is an amazingly bad piece of work. I've covered Kevorkian for four years for *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair* and other publications, and have helped produce three television documentaries about him, so I know a good bit about who he is and what he does.

While one can plausibly criticize the man and his methods, Gutmann has not only failed to interview him or his lawyer, Geoffrey Fieger, she has not—as far as I know—come to Michigan to interview the people most closely involved, friends or foes, or to observe any of these trials.

Perhaps as a consequence, she gets some of her facts wrong, omits others and generally descends into psychobabble. She appears to think that Kevorkian is either from or still lives in Royal Oak, Michigan, that he still helps people die with the aid of "the bottles and tubes" of his suicide machine, when his last twenty-seven patients inhaled carbon monoxide gas, and that Janet Adkins died in a parking lot. She also hints no one knows whether Adkins had Alzheimer's, when an autopsy clearly confirmed she had a severe case.

Gutmann also states flatly that an autopsy "found nothing wrong" with Marjorie Wantz, who suffered from "pelvic pain," though in the actual trial Dr. Ljubisa Dragovic, the medical examiner and a stout Kevorkian foe who performed the post-mortem, testified that the woman's vulva had been entirely removed. Nor did he refute testimony that part of a needle had been left inside Wantz during one of her ten surgeries.

What bothers me is not so much Gutmann's conclusions; it's her journalistic laziness. When I first began following Kevorkian's odyssey I had the same hypothesis: that he was a creepy old bachelor preying on susceptible, menopausal women. I changed my mind after spending many hours viewing the videotapes, sitting through trials, interviewing dozens of prospective patients and family members. Throughout all this I have not seen one iota of evidence that Kevorkian treats his male patients differently from his female ones.

Weaving hypotheses without doing the legwork and actually interviewing those concerned is much easier; perhaps another writer could speculate that Kevorkian helps people die out of delayed rage at the Armenian Holocaust that wiped out most of his parents' family, and it would be at least as entertaining. But it's not journalism, which is what I thought TNR purported to do.

JACK LESSENBERRY
Detroit, Michigan

Stephanie Gutmann replies:

In the main, Jack Lessenberry didn't like my ideas so he used the standard tactic in these cases: producing a list of "errors." As in all of these types of letters, the charges are trivial and hair-splitting when they are not wrong. Take his statement about Adkins's autopsy: if Lessenberry calms down and checks the article he'll notice that I wrote that an Alzheimer diagnosis could not be confirmed *when she was planning her suicide.* There are many doctors on the record who say that they would have been reluctant to diagnose Alzheimer's precisely because its symptoms are often identical to very curable depression.

I have the highest respect for just-the-facts style reporting available in publications like *The New York Times*—for which Mr. Lessenberry is a stringer—but if that's all journalists were permitted to do with events or if we always had to wait until we had perfect knowledge and perfect conditions, a lot of worthwhile, thought-provoking stuff wouldn't get written and the world would be a very dull place indeed.

Passive aggressive

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen makes a hash of some distinctions he thinks are important in "What Right to Die?" (June 24). The right to refuse unwanted treatment, even if one is terminally ill, is "passive euthanasia." What Rosen describes as doctors administering a lethal dose to a dying patient is "active euthanasia," and if the patient wanted the doctor to do that it is "voluntary active" (not passive) euthanasia.

Assisted suicide is still "criminal" in all states, not just thirty-four, insofar as it is considered homicide; as of this writing the two federal circuit opinions may be reviewed by the Supreme Court. And it does not occur "when a doctor prescribes medication that may ease pain *or* cause death," as Rosen states. If that were true then doctors couldn't prescribe any medication that can suppress respiration if taken in high doses, like morphine, and couldn't treat pain in many cases. Rather, assisted suicide requires the intent to prescribe enough

THE TROUBLE WITH BLAME

VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS, AND RESPONSIBILITY

SHARON LAMB

"For Lamb...the knotty criminal-justice problems of sexual assault, domestic battery and rape do not parse neatly into categories of guilt and innocence, right and wrong, good and evil. Instead she sees those crises as surface echoes of profound social and gender dynamics, as unhappy outcomes to which both parties contribute...**[A] brisk, sharply written essay...[Lamb offers] a sophisticated position** that takes some time to digest, but in the end it makes an enormous amount of sense. Lamb has written a book that uniquely captures her twin senses of sympathy and rectitude—a combination our prison-happy lawmakers would do well to ponder."

—Paul Reidinger, ABA JOURNAL

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of a potentially lethal drug that if the patient decides to commit suicide with an overdose, he or she will have enough to do the job. In other words, it's not just a matter of double-effect; the opportunity for the patient to commit suicide is the intended effect.

On a substantive point, Rosen ignores the most interesting argument put forward by the second circuit court in their decision striking down the New York statute against physician-assisted suicide: that it violates the equal protection clause. Consider two terminally-ill patients. One is being sustained on some life-support system whereas the other is not. The first patient can insist that the life support be withdrawn, and in effect commit suicide, but the second cannot under current law ask the doctor to help end his life.

I agree that legalizing doctor-assisted suicide is bad public policy, not because of legal arcana, but because such a practice is too convenient for a society that does not provide adequate health care to all.

JONATHAN D. MORENO
Brooklyn, New York

Hallelujah!

To the editors:

John Simpkins's piece on Southern black family life ("All in the Family," July 1) is interesting, like TNR itself, for the ideological contradictions it contains. Simpkins denounces the "radical right" and its emphasis on illegitimacy (a term that, revealingly, he feels necessary to place in quotes), while at the same time extolling the "spiritual attraction of the black church" and excoriating other blacks who have left it behind. Unfortunately for Simpkins, as for liberal Christians in general, you cannot have it both ways. The "black church" he praises is supposedly built upon the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, whose own words in the Bible make clear the immorality of fornication and, of course, illegitimacy. Simpkins's approach is typical of Christians, black and white, who believe a relationship with God is built upon cries of "Hallelujah!" rather than a strict (and boring) code of conduct consistent with true discipleship. Yes, those WASPs are boring, but funny how they tend to be so successful. Another point worth mentioning is Simpkins's take on the black extended family. The "radical right" has been saying for years that AFDC removes young black women from the context of their extended family structure (and its associated financial support) and tells them, falsely, that they "can make it on their own." Using Simpkins's own logic, it appears that the "radical right" is not radical at all—but merely right.

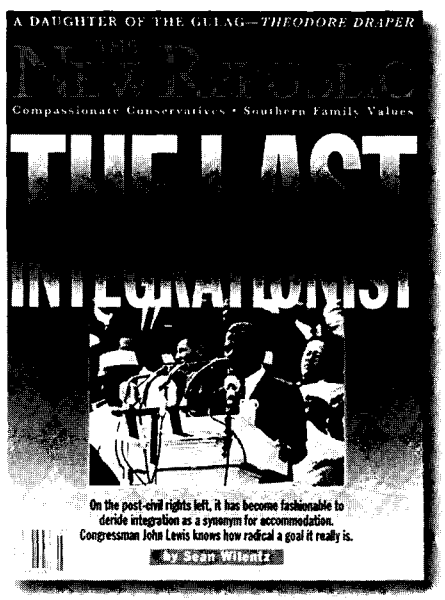
JON F. FIELDER
Houston, Texas

Bitter sweet

To the editors:

In his article "Sweet Charity" (July 1), Matthew Miller gratuitously and erroneously states "[b]y all accounts ... intricate schemes to reward incremental investment in business plant and equipment or research and development have flopped."

The "intricate scheme" Miller refers to is the research and development (R&D) tax credit, enacted in 1981. He seems to argue that the credit is not needed since


A DAUGHTER OF THE GULAG—THEODORE DRAPER
Compassionate Conservatives • Southern Family Values
On the post-civil rights left, it has become fashionable to deride integration as a synonym for accommodation. Congressman John Lewis knows how radical a goal it really is.

R&D will be done with or without the credit. He fails to understand that the R&D credit is an "incremental" credit which applies only to increases in R&D spending, not a "flat rate" credit available for the first dollar of research which is performed. The R&D credit is a true incentive, not a windfall.

In terms of increasing R&D spending, there are many more research projects than can be funded, and promising ideas must often be cut from the list. The R&D credit serves to expand the range of projects which will be undertaken. For example, the credit supports valuable medical research on breast cancer, cystic fibrosis, AIDS and other diseases that otherwise, because of economic constraints, may not be done or maintained at existing levels without the support of the credit. Indeed, the credit could well make the difference in finding cures for these deadly diseases. This would do much to alleviate suffering in the same communities which are served by the charitable organizations which would benefit from the proposed charitable contributions credit.

CARL FELDBAUM
President, BIO,
Washington, D.C.

Wisconsin cheese

To the editors:

The critique of our recent press conference concerning Wisconsin's new welfare initiative (Notebook, June 17) acknowledges that some of our criticisms were "reasonable-but-remediable." Here is a brief summary of some of those criticisms.

Our concern with Wisconsin's plan is not that it requires welfare recipients to work; the Center for Law and Social Policy has praised a number of state initiatives that do so. Our principal concern is that the Wisconsin plan makes no assurance of jobs or other assistance to families in need, and has been structured in a way that would deepen the poverty of tens of thousands of families.

Wisconsin's plan has been characterized as assuring jobs, child care and health care assistance to families in need instead of providing welfare. That description is inaccurate. Under the state's legislation, the state would have no responsibility to provide a job, child care subsidy or health plan coverage for any family.

In designing its program, Wisconsin faced a problem that bedevils many welfare reform efforts: work programs cost money. To control these costs, Wisconsin proposes to put in place policies which directly and indirectly reduce aid to a broad array of poor families. In many cases families in which a parent works every available hour under the state program will face increased poverty. So will families of thousands of low-wage workers currently receiving cash assistance. So will the low-income working families who will face increased child care copayments that may reach or exceed hundreds of dollars each month. At the same time, the Wisconsin legislation sharply cuts assistance to disabled parents caring for children, and will reduce the income of thousands of grandparents and other non-parents caring for poor children.

We agree that the problems in the Wisconsin plan could be remedied. But the problems won't likely be remedied if Wisconsin insists that its waiver must be approved without modification, and if the administration approves the plan before giving serious scrutiny to its contents.

MARK GREENBERG
Senior Staff Attorney
Center for Law and Social Policy
Washington, D.C.

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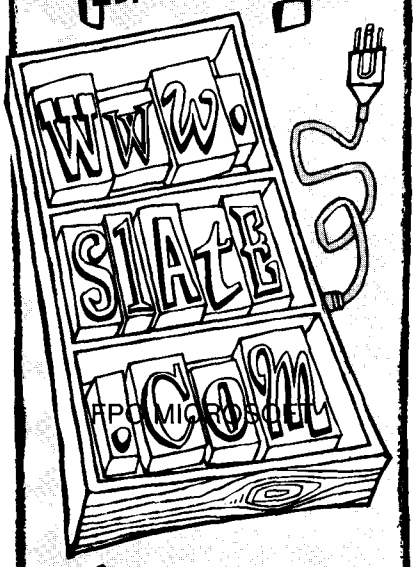

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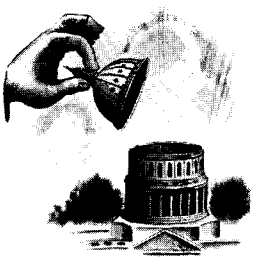
FROM WASHINGTON

B.S. agenda

Reform Party candidate Richard Lamm has won high marks from editorialists for going after "sacred cows." But candor and boldness are not always useful attributes in a politician. It depends on the issue, and whether the politician is right or wrong about it. Winston Churchill on the Nazi peril was one thing. Richard Lamm on Social Security is quite another.

For the last decade, Lamm has warned that Social Security is "heading for bankruptcy." "Social Security will create insecurity for America's children," Lamm declared July 9 when he announced his candidacy. Social Security "will be broke when my children retire," he intoned last June. Lamm also frames the issue as one of "intergenerational equity." "Public policy," he maintains, "should not blindly transfer money from the young to the old."



Lamm says he is offering a "no B.S. agenda," but his pronouncements on Social Security—like those of other doomsayers—are almost entirely B.S. Is Social Security going bankrupt? According to the Social Security Administration, the program will run a surplus for the next two decades, which will reach $3.1 trillion in 2015. The baby-boom retirement will then force it to begin drawing on that surplus to meet annual expenses. If nothing is done to raise revenue or reduce benefits, the program will first incur a deficit in 2030. That's thirty-four years from now! And if we sit on our hands for seventy-four years, it will have incurred a deficit of 2.2 percent of payroll per year. Sure, that's a problem. But compared to, say, the solvency of the Medicare fund, it's a manageable one.

The eventual deficit could be met, as former Social Security Commissioner Robert Ball has proposed, by increasing the Social Security tax 2 percent (1 percent each on employees and employers) in the year 2050 and by allocating 40 percent of the trust fund to equity purchases rather than to lower-interest Treasury bills. Or it could be met now by raising the payroll tax on employees and employers 1.1 percent each. If all our problems were this dire, Congress would only have to meet several months a year.

Is Lamm right that Social Security unfairly transfers wealth from young to old? That an unconscionable act of intergenerational inequity is taking place? Look at the program's origins. In the nineteenth century, most Americans lived on or near farms in large, extended families where costs were shared among generations. As they got older, they worked less rather than retired. By the 1930s, Americans were living longer, living in smaller families in cities and working in other people's factories and offices until, if they survived past 65, they were forced to retire. Unable to count on their extended families, they sometimes became victims of poverty and of the powerlessness borne of physical and mental deterioration.

The adoption of the Social Security Act in 1935, and its subsequent amendment, didn't just dramatically improve the lot of older Americans. It also improved the lives of their children by freeing them from the financial and emotional responsibility for taking care of their parents when they became unable to work. If anything, Social Security places undue burden not on the younger generation, but on their parents, who become responsible not only for bringing up their own children (an unfunded liability!), but also for funding their own retirement through Social Security taxes.

Lamm argues that Social Security recipients are making out like bandits. "The rate of return earned by today's retirees would make a loanshark blush," Lamm wrote in 1990. "The average retiree gets back his or her payroll taxes, plus tax-free interest, four times over from Social Security, and ten times over from Medicare." That's nonsense. The first generations of Social Security recipients naturally received more in benefits than they put in, but subsequent generations have increasingly put in about what they have drawn out.

Lamm and other critics of Social Security cook the figures by leaving out employer contributions and not counting what retirees would have received if they had kept their money in interest-bearing accounts. Assuming a 3 percent annual

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 5, 1996

KARADZIC TO CLINTON: DROP DEAD

Why is the United States in Bosnia? There were three reasons for the American intervention: moral, strategic, political. The moral reason was the prevention of genocide. (No, the United States acted too late for that. The moral reason was the prevention of *more* genocide.) The strategic reason was the stabilization of southern Europe, which requires the containment of Serbian ambition and aggression. The political reason was the preemption of any damage that Bosnia might inflict upon Bill Clinton's campaign for president.

We always suspected that the administration acted primarily for political reasons—after the disaster at Srebrenica, the humiliation of the president began to seem electorally significant—but sometimes people do the right thing for the wrong reasons, and so we supported the president. After all, the prevention of more genocide is not a minor accomplishment, and this, along with the substantial disarming of the combatants in the Bosnian field, Clinton has accomplished. But the summer air in America is thick with politics, and the Clinton campaign is terrified of trouble in Bosnia, and so the Clinton administration is giving evidence again of the timidity for which it was famous.

The problem is the old one. Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are defying the United States, and Slobodan Milosevic is assisting in their defiance. Karadzic and Mladic have been indicted by the Hague for war crimes. Last week, on the first anniversary of Srebrenica, an international warrant was issued for their arrest, which means that member states of the United Nations are obligated to detain these blood-soaked gentlemen if they find them within their borders. The charges against them were also expanded. The leaders of Republika Srpska, said the court, "were not only informed of the crimes allegedly committed under their authority, but also, and in particular, they exercised their power in order to plan, instigate, order, and otherwise aid and abet in the planning, preparation and execution of the said crimes."

The Western response was in the old style. "In Washington," Jonathan C. Randal reported in *The Washington Post*, "a State Department official said the court's decision is unlikely to make much difference in the way in which the U.S.-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia carries out its duties." And a statement by the "contact group" proclaimed that "the prime responsibility for getting him [Karadzic] there [to the Hague] rests with the parties." The war criminals can continue to have a nice day.

American commanders on the ground have expressed confidence in their ability to deliver the war criminals to the authorities, but the Clinton administration worries that a military operation might go wrong, that an American soldier might get hurt, and it is reluctant to give the Dole campaign such a gift. The administration is seeking a diplomatic solution, having forgotten the lesson of last year, which was that Karadzic and Mladic are delighted by diplomacy, since they fear only the use of force.

It is not an enviable claim to fame, to be known as the man who can speak Slobodan Milosevic's language; but there is Richard Holbrooke, back in Belgrade, doing just that. The administration has rightly concluded that the brute of Belgrade is the boss of the brute of Pale. (Holbrooke's assignment became a little less appetizing last week, when the Hague announced an investigation of Milosevic's complicity in "a plan [that] existed, and [was] designed at the highest Serbian political and military level, to set up a new state [in Bosnia] through the use of violence.") Holbrooke was the architect of Dayton, which promoted Milosevic into a peacemaker. Milosevic was pleased to play such a role, not least because it was preceded by the lifting of sanctions against his country. Now Holbrooke is bringing the threat of renewed sanctions to Belgrade. Milosevic may be persuaded by the threat, though the last time around American sanctions turned out to be porous. But Milosevic may also make a threat of his own. He knows that Clinton is counting on a withdrawal of American troops by the end of the year. And he knows he has the power to interfere with that timetable, to cause havoc where Clinton needs order.

Does anybody really believe Karadzic and Mladic will go willingly? They are, after all, in their own minds, and in the minds of many Serbs, great men; and they are running a police state. And does anybody really believe the political reconstruction of Bosnia can proceed while Karadzic and Mladic flourish in its midst? After the evil wind that blew through Bosnia, there will be no reconstruction unless there is justice. We do not expect Bill Clinton to be moved by the appeal to justice. We know what moves him, and so we hope he will notice that Pale is once again making him look like a sucker. •

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NOTEBOOK

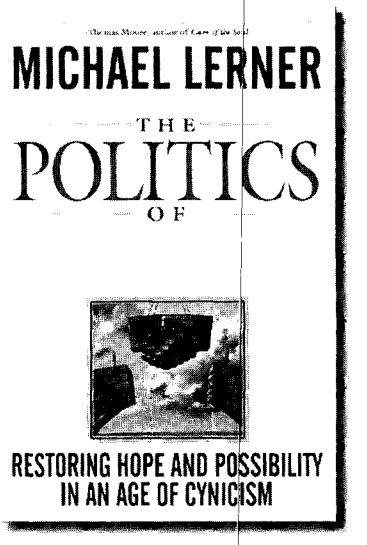
TRASH TV: Political ads are notoriously fast and loose with the facts, but the Republican National Committee is fast setting new standards for looseness. First, the RNC ran spots saying the "typical" American family's tax bite has risen $1,500 under Bill Clinton. That's twice wrong: Clinton's tax hike hit only the decidedly atypical top 1 percent of taxpayers; and all but $300 of the $1,500 increase is the result of rising incomes, not higher tax rates. Now, a new GOP ad blames the Democrats for sinking this year's health care bill. "The Republican Congress wants to make sure workers who lose or change jobs keep their insurance," a voice says plaintively. "But liberal Democrats are blocking this common-sense approach." Cut to sinister, grainy black-and-white footage of Ted Kennedy and Bill Clinton. Ted Kennedy? This is the man who *co-authored* the bill the ad touts! Next stop: how David Bonior killed the minimum wage.

IDIOT CULTURE NO MORE: In a soul-searching confession in *Newsweek*, Geraldo Rivera has renounced his tabloid past for a new "responsible" and "soulful" talk show. "I was going to hell," writes the sometime purveyor of *Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground*. So a religious-style conversion reformed Geraldo. Or was it the plummeting Q-ratings? Either way, big changes are in store. The name "Geraldo" will be replaced by the more tasteful "The Geraldo Rivera Show." And, proving his commitment to journalistic seriousness, the handsome host will now appear on the set wearing glasses. Where have you gone, Phil Donahue?

ONLY IN AMERICA: "He's not Jewish, he does not have a Ph.D. in Jewish Studies, and he doesn't speak or understand Hebrew," said Professor Samuel Heilman of the department of Jewish Studies at Queens College, about his colleague Professor Thomas Bird, who had just been named director of the department. "That's like making me head of the Black Studies program." He was speaking to reporters and a grotesque little scandal ensued. Congratulations to Heilman for carrying his community and his field into the tribal ugliness that has characterized other communities and other fields in multicultural America. Why must a Black Studies program be headed by a black? Why must a Jewish Studies program be headed by a Jew? In a university, all that should matter is scholarly and pedagogic competence. If one has it, then one's ethnic or racial identity should be of no consequence; and if one does not have it, then one's ethnic or racial identity should be of no consequence. Bird does not know Hebrew, but he knows Yiddish, which he has taught on the Queens faculty for many years. (If he is good enough to teach in the department, why is he not good enough to chair the department?) He has also been active, intellectually and politically, on behalf of Soviet Jewry—but wait, that's Heilmanism. Bird's activism has no bearing on the question of his academic qualifications, since it is not the purpose of Jewish Studies departments to be identity factories, or so we would like to suppose. Heilman's own work, we might add, does not exactly glow in the dark. Anyway, his little exercise in ethnic purity paid off: Bird, a Catholic, resigned his post, rightly complaining of "bigotry." We thank Heilman for reminding us that one can be Jewish, have a Ph.D. in Jewish Studies, speak and understand Hebrew, and still be a fool.

THE SHELTERING SKY: D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton has been winning raves for her plan to spur investment in the district by slashing its federal income taxes; last week she reeled in big fish Newt Gingrich himself. This, despite a Treasury estimate that the cut would cost about $700 million a year. For that price, the federal government could more than *double* its annual payment to the city. But we shouldn't worry about the $700 million estimate, say Jack Kemp and other supply-side backers of the scheme. The cut will spur a surge of economic activity and end up paying for itself. Hmm. Why does that argument sound familiar?

WE ALWAYS KNEW IT WAS MEANINGLESS:



—from an ad in *Tikkun*, as it appeared

HOME NEWS: We're pleased to announce that, starting in November, William Powers, now of *The Washington Post*, will join our ranks as a senior editor. Powers, who now writes the *Post*'s "Magazine Reader" column as well as other features on politics, the news media, literature and popular culture, will launch a column of criticism and reporting on the media here. We look forward to having his subtle judgment, wit and sharp reportorial eye in our pages. •

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The church fires smolder.

TWICE BURNED

By Cinqué Henderson

"Every problem known to man has been known before," reads the sign on the wall of the Beulah Baptist Church in Hopkins, South Carolina. It was hung at the turn of the century, when white parishioners, fleeing the arrival of a handful of blacks, burned the church down. Then, as now, this bit of Ecclesiastes quieted Christian fears by assuring them there is just one devil in the world, and his name is Jim Crow. To name something is somehow to neutralize it. As one spiritual has it, "Name him, chain him, call him out and shame him."

Although arsonists haven't touched it in 100 years, Beulah shares this credo with those Southern churches that have recently burned. The Reverend Gardner Taylor shamed the devil on the Charlie Rose show: "I think this conspiracy goes back to Reconstruction, Nathan Bedford Forrest's Ku Klux Klan and ... on to the civil rights revolution." Taylor is earnest, and it's easy to see why. Black church burnings are a long-standing symbol of racial enmity in America, whose meaning requires no interpretation. Indeed, it takes hard work *not* to see these fires as confirmation that, for black people, the world hasn't changed much. Yet, no matter how familiar this all may seem, it's actually something new.

On Super Bowl Sunday last year, according to reports, Robert Johnson was playing cards in the back room of Sweety Peety, the local tavern in Columbia, Tennessee. Drunk and losing, he made up his mind he was being cheated. So he and two buddies planted a burning cross on the lawn of Sweety Peety. They firebombed Friendship Missionary Church, then did the same to Canaan Methodist.

As terrible as this story is, some specifics make it less simple than it might first seem: Sweety Peety is black-owned. Friendship Missionary is in another county. Canaan Methodist is in another town. Robert Johnson and his friends were arrested shortly after the fires and are serving time in jail. Before being sentenced, Johnson cried out loud in court, "I know I was in the wrong. I know that making crosses and bombs, that's a terrible thing to do.... I hope God forgets what we've done."

In the South of Johnson's father, the local tavern in Columbia would not have been black-owned. Johnson wouldn't have needed to drive miles to another county to plant his bombs. He wouldn't have been arrested. He wouldn't have been jailed. He surely would not have cried out to God to forgive him.

All this is to say the white vandals committing these crimes are doing so in isolation, without the cultural or political sanction they could have taken for granted a generation ago. Compare Johnson to Byron de la Beckwith, Medgar Evers's killer, who is still defiantly proclaiming his innocence and the eventual triumph of the Aryan nation. The recent fires are not powerful political acts but the random mischief of a bunch of hoodlums who are racists, to be sure, but who don't have the power to carry out any large-scale conspiracy, either. The fires prove precisely how the South has changed, and how poor, white, uneducated men like Robert Johnson are finding the world they inherited fast shrinking around them. "[They] have become so alienated," Andrew Young said. "The people who are burning churches are, for the most part, people who ought to be in college, but whom society has left behind." The story here may be not the victims, but the victimizers.

But the old civil rights establishment has too much at stake to refocus the discussion. One crucial piece of information has been studiously avoided: one-third of those indicted in the burnings have been black. Jesse Jackson, sensing the damage this could inflict on the spin, flew to Tennessee to defend a minister suspected by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents of torching his own church. To admit the possibility of his guilt would be to dispel the notion of blacks as perfect victims, to cease playing upon whatever sentiments this country still has toward the faithful, long-suffering darky. It is the companion piece to blacks as violent marauders, though neither stereotype takes account of the human middle where most blacks reside.

The civil rights leaders who have resurfaced in the wake of these fires have been given a second chance at power. Thirty years ago, they earned moral capital as modern-day founding fathers. But these men and women have been oddly displaced. Pushed out by Louis Farrakhan's nationalism and Colin Powell's Republicanism, these old-school integrationists have been scrambling for a guidebook to the new game. Now the end of race-based congressional districts threatens to cripple their authority permanently. These fires now allow them to say, "Leave the driving to us."

When did anyone last hear from Roger Wilkins or Nelson Rivers of the NAACP? When did anyone last see Andrew Young and Joe Smitherman, mayor of Selma, arm in arm? When did anyone last hear such phrases as, "They can burn the church, but they can't burn the faith" or "Ain't no Nazis gonna turn us around"? For all their errors in making this episode into something it isn't, to the civil rights leaders there is a virtue in finding such righteous language once again. The world of the civil rights leaders is a better world than that of the Republicans or the nationalists, and if this episode helps us return to it, it might be worth the spin.

CINQUÉ HENDERSON has written for *Newsweek* and *The Boston Globe.*

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A Clinton wimp-out on China.

MEANS TEST

By Joshua Muravchik

This June, in a now familiar summer ritual, Congress acquiesced in President Clinton's renewal of China's Most Favored Nation trading status. Faced with the annual pleas from human rights groups and jibes from Republicans, the Clintonites argued, as they have for two years, that trade and human rights should be decoupled. There are more effective and less dangerous ways, they said, to show solidarity with reformers in China.

Should we take such arguments seriously? Go back to 1993, when Clinton publicly threatened not to renew MFN the following year if China didn't show progress in seven specific human rights categories. When the summer of 1994 rolled around, China had shown no improvement in five, the administration admitted. Clinton was forced into an agonizing about-face; this was when he first announced the "delinking" position. He renewed MFN but adamantly insisted the decision did not spell the end of American efforts to promote Chinese democracy.

As proof, Clinton announced a "new human rights strategy" to appease his critics. It consisted of a statement of principles to guide American firms doing business in China; a Radio Free Asia to broadcast into the mainland; heightened condemnation of Chinese human rights violations within international forums; and increased support for Chinese non-governmental organizations "working to advance the cause of human rights."

California Congressman Tom Lantos took up the first element of this strategy. He introduced a bill to create a code of conduct for American firms in China analogous to the "Sullivan principles" in apartheid South Africa. The bill imposed no criminal penalties for firms flouting the code. It merely denied them American diplomatic aid in securing Chinese contracts. But it still proved too strong for Clinton. Instead, the administration issued new guidelines. These included no incentive for compliance, and they applied to U.S. companies throughout the world, making no special mention of China.

The second element was a Radio Free Asia. In 1992, after testimonials citing the remarkable success of U.S. broadcasting to Eastern Europe during the cold war, a joint presidential-congressional study commission recommended setting up a similar service to reach China and Asia's other totalitarian regimes. During the presidential campaign, Clinton endorsed the idea, but, when diplomats suggested it would offend Chinese government sensibilities, he promptly put it on the back burner. In 1994, Clinton said he had ordered "increased broadcasts for Radio Free Asia," an extraordinary statement since, thanks to him, it didn't exist. It still doesn't.

The third part of Clinton's agenda was to enlist other countries in the effort to improve the human rights situation in China. The U.S. would "insist that the U.N. Human Rights Commission pass a resolution dealing with the serious human rights abuses in China." We have never won such a vote, and this year we lost ground: Beijing managed to block even its consideration. This setback is attributable partly to changes in the composition of the Human Rights Commission and waffling by some European democracies, but the administration's half-hearted effort was also responsible. "Months of divisions in Washington and mixed signals from the Clinton Administration on how it would deal with Beijing's human rights record," *The New York Times* reported, had allowed China to launch a successful "international campaign against the measure."

Clinton's final initiative was to "support the many new private organizations springing up in China and working ... to express their views on a range of subjects including human rights." At best, this was wishful thinking. During the liberalization of the 1980s, such entities did emerge, but after Tiananmen they were all suppressed. Non-governmental organizations were replaced by what people in the field call "gangos," short for "governmental nongovernmental organizations." These are nominally independent groups controlled by the state. Recently, some more autonomous groups have begun to re-emerge, but none of them expresses unauthorized views, especially not on human rights. None has yet to receive U.S. government assistance.

Alternatively, the Clinton administration could have pursued reform by increasing support, possibly through the National Endowment for Democracy, to Chinese human rights and democracy groups in exile. There are many such groups, all operating on a shoestring, and they find ways to transmit their views into China. But no such increase has been proposed.

When Bill Clinton announced in 1994 he would grant China Most Favored Nation trading status in perpetuity, he might have argued that America's economic interests in China, and our desire not to provoke a new cold war, simply outweighed our concern for human rights. But he did not make that argument. Rather, he insisted that human rights in China still mattered to his administration, that the debate between supporters and opponents of MFN was over means, not principles. Two years ago, it was possible to take that argument seriously. Today it no longer is.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author most recently of *The Imperative of American Leadership: A Challenge to Neo-Isolationism* (AEI Press).

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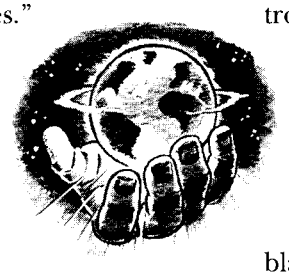
NATIONAL INSECURITY

CANADA SLY

By Charles Lane

Ian Delaney's kids won't be going to Disney World this year. Dad's company, the Canadian metals firm Sherritt International, runs a nickel mine and processing plant in Moa Bay, Cuba, which belonged to Americans before Fidel Castro nationalized it. Under the new Helms-Burton Law, Delaney is considered to be trafficking in stolen U.S. property. As punishment, he can't cross the border. Nor can his wife or minor children.

Should we feel bad about this? Yes, say *The New York Times* and other high-minded critics of Helms-Burton. The new law, the paper laments, runs "counter to normal American standards of conduct" and "offend[s] the sovereignty of America's closest allies." Canada, Mexico and Europe are crying foul, threatening retaliatory sanctions of their own. These countries, along with American foes of Helms-Burton, also contend the law (like the U.S. trade embargo itself) deprives Cuba of liberalizing contact with the outside world. If you want democracy, they say, start with capitalism.



But Sherritt's example, and that of other Canadians who do business in Cuba, shows that these foreign operations are a caricature of competitive capitalism. Their impact is anything but subversive. Rather, they reinforce Castro's grip on power, just as American banana companies once bolstered the *comprador* elites of Central America. What's really "offensive" is the moral obtuseness with which the political and business elites of Europe and Canada view Castro's dictatorship, and the sanctimony with which they exploit Helms-Burton to vent cheap anti-American sentiment.

When Canadian investors come to Havana, they don't shop around for partners among the Cuban populace at large; the average Cuban can't own private property, much less engage in ventures with foreigners. All deals are negotiated with the government, often with Fidel personally. No competitive bids, no international tender offers in *The Economist*, just a nod from the man in charge—much as Fulgencio Battista used to cut backroom deals with U.S. firms in the Havana of the 1950s.

The Canadian government sometimes discreetly greases the wheels. Take the case of York Medical, Inc., an Ontario-based firm established recently for the express purpose of marketing Cuban-made drugs and medical equipment. Last year, Canada's foreign-aid agency paid travel and other costs for a representative of the firm to meet in Havana with Cuban biotechnology officials. The trip included a meeting with Castro at the Canadian Embassy arranged by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau—an "adviser" to York Medical whose relationship with Castro dates to the Trudeau government's opposition to U.S. Cuba policy. Saskatchewan's government invested almost $250,000 in York Medical and further subsidizes it by testing Cuban diagnostic equipment in a provincial public hospital.

Cuba's Foreign Investment Law forbids Cubans from going to any foreign-owned mine or hotel to ask for a job. Nor, of course, are there free Cuban labor unions to bargain for the workforce collectively. Rather, Canadian companies agree in advance to hire their Cuban workers through the island's national employment agency, which is controlled by the Communist Party—and vets workers for political obedience. Simon Cooper, a Canadian hotelier on the island, told *The Globe and Mail* that he makes sure *not* to be "perceived as contracting directly with individuals [or] encouraging a free market in any way."

So much for liberalizing contact. What's more, Canadian firms don't pay Cuban workers directly. They give the employment agency a per-worker fee—in U.S. dollars—of which the vast majority is pocketed by the Castro regime. The Cuban state-run Geominerca enterprise, for example, gets $2,700 per month for each Cuban geologist employed by Canada's MacDonald Mines. (MacDonald is developing gold deposits from which the Cuban government could realize half of all profits.) The geologists get 350 Cuban pesos from the government—less than $10 at black market exchange rates. Foreign firms must set aside a modest number of dollars for "incentive" payments to workers, but this doesn't nearly make up the difference.

Delaney, the largest Canadian investor in Cuba, may be the most egregious beneficiary of this cozy system. In September 1990, he engineered a hostile takeover of Sherritt and its shuttered Alberta nickel refinery. The plant had gone bust for lack of a cheap source of raw material. Meanwhile, the Soviets were pulling out of Cuba, and Castro was stuck with his own moribund nickel mine: Moa Bay, which the U.S. firm Freeport Sulfur built for $75 million, only to have it nationalized in 1959 and run into the ground by Soviet and Czech advisers. In January 1991, Delaney flew his corporate jet to Havana and cut a purchase deal with the *comandante en jefe*. Along with millions in working capital, Delaney brought the appropriate political sensibility to the table. Of Castro, he has said: "You don't keep his job by being a repressive dictator. You keep his job because you have a deeply felt sense of national pride and unity. He's charismatic, charming, a terrific listener whose depth of knowledge is very good."

Sherritt's management practices have brought Moa Bay back up to the level of production Freeport once envisioned. Cuban nickel output climbed from 26,000 tons in 1994 to 44,000 tons in 1995. Castro's regime prof-

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its from its share of the $16 million annual payroll at Moa Bay. As of December 1994, it also gets half the earnings, which totaled $26.6 million in 1995, from sales of finished nickel made by Sherritt's refinery in Alberta. Before his U.S. visa was revoked, Delaney said he planned to invest $165 million more in Cuba over the next five years. He is buying into hotels and recently paid Castro $10 million for oil deposits claimed by a U.S. firm.

Cuban workers at Canadian firms are, to be sure, treated a bit better than those who drudge away in wholly state-run Cuban enterprises. Sherritt gave miners overalls, hard hats, steel-toed boots and new washrooms. The company is also investing in an environmental cleanup of the Moa Bay operation, because residents have told Canadian reporters of stinging rust-colored smoke pouring from the plant's chimneys and metal-laced mine run-off flowing into the bay.

Nevertheless, Canadian investors in Cuba sound defensive about their participation in a labor system no Canadian worker would tolerate for five minutes. Just as Castro's academic apologists cite Cuba's allegedly bountiful social services to extenuate Castro's political repression, so Canadian businessmen invoke free Cuban healthcare to rationalize their exploitation of cheap, government-supplied Cuban labor. Cooper, for one, told *The Globe and Mail* that Cuba is "a cradle-to-grave socialist country that takes care to one degree or another of all the needs of its people. I wouldn't presume to judge the degree to which the population is or isn't exploited."

Delaney, too, poses as a protector of Cuba's egalitarian status quo. "If we were paying them directly, would it be better?" he mused to *The Globe and Mail*. "You can have a long, long social debate about that ... if we went in and put all the employees on a dollar wage, it would destroy the social fabric of Moa Bay. You would have a two-tier society and that's not in our interest." Ian Delaney is not one for long, long social debates. As the *Toronto Star* put it, "doing business with a dictator has been a rewarding personal and business experience." "I only have two responsibilities," he said. "That is to keep the balance sheet solvent and get the strategy right."

Trying to contain the ire of Canada and other Western governments, the Clinton administration has said it will postpone implementation of some Helms-Burton provisions, pending a campaign to convert the allies to its cause. One idea is to apply to Cuba a version of the Sullivan Principles, the code of humane conduct for U.S. businesses in South Africa during apartheid. It's hard to see how democratic governments could object to this, but they'll probably try.

President Clinton got tough on Western subsidization of Castro only after the Cuban air force shot down two Cuban-American civilian planes in international airspace last February, threatening to make Cuba an election issue in 1996. But Clinton's lonely stand is the right one, whether he sincerely believes in it or not. Helms-Burton may not be the most surgical instrument. Certainly it's not the most diplomatic. But throwing Cuba open to Ian Delaney and his ilk is no solution, either. When it comes to dealing with Castro, it is our neighbors to the north who occupy the moral low ground. •

Benjamin Netanyahu, superstar.

ISRAEL BONDS

By Martin Peretz

Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to the United States was a triumph, and not just a personal one. It reflects a bond between the two peoples traceable to the Protestant dissenters who sought to build here the "new American Zion," and nurtured more recently by the common ideological loneliness that Israel and the United States, as free societies, felt during the cold war.

Still, not so long ago it appeared that rancor toward Israel had a future in American politics, on both the left and right. Today, however, exactly nobody cares what George McGovern or Ramsey Clark thinks about Israel; and Bob Dole, with a splenetic record on this score, now covets the title of Israel's most reliable friend in Washington. This leaves only Pat Buchanan and a cohort of black leaders—Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan most prominent among them—whose popularity appears impervious to the dead ends into which they have led their followers. George Bush and James Baker represented the last gasp of patrician disdain for Israel—and for American Jews—in a party (and a country) now almost wholly without patricians. They have no successors.

Bill Clinton and Al Gore's friendship toward Israel is more authentic and uncompromising than that of any previous U.S. administration, including Harry Truman's. Other pro-Israel Democrats who could now

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occupy the White House might have held vaguely similar sentiments, only more casually, thus less dependably. But the attachments of the present incumbents comport altogether with popular sentiment, even if that sentiment sometimes has more to do with the scorn in which most Americans hold Arab politics than with active identification with the Jewish state.

Still, it is not hard to grasp why Israel's pluck—its self-reliant military (so much in contrast with wards like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait), its entrepreneurship, its toughness of mind—appeals to Americans. You could almost touch that affinity when Netanyahu was in Washington in a way that you never did when Shimon Peres, the fussy poet of literary paradox, visited. For all his slickness, Netanyahu seems to Americans to incarnate his country's strength of character, not quite as much as the gruff soldier Yitzhak Rabin, but close.

But his party's ideologues should not misunderstand what is being admired. Americans do not support the fantasy of a greater Israel; they support the reality of a secure Israel, and they know that the maps of these two visions are not identical. Of course, Netanyahu knows this also, and it constitutes the grounds of his dispute with the right wing of his own government. It is not his view that wherever one of the patriarchs walked there must be Jewish sovereignty. The palpable good feeling between the two countries could easily be soured were Jerusalem to assert the cartography of the Bible as the necessary dimensions of the modern state.

But, if the Likud should refrain from over-reading the American link to Israel, the Arabs should also not underestimate its significance. The old Arab dream that the U.S. would tire of its kinship with the Zionists had some high moments during the cold war, when policymakers such as John Foster Dulles and James Baker strategized that an alliance with the Arab world would prove a more valuable asset than the often isolating association with Israel. But the loyalty of Arab polities (other than that of the precarious monarchies), could not, as it turned out, be acquired, although it was at times rented. A coalition between revolutionary pan-Arabism (or Muslim literalism) and American democracy was simply not to be. Now, of course, such schemes are the stuff of diplomatic history, the end of the cold war having finally eclipsed the flimsy rationale upon which Dulles and Baker based their case against the Jews.

Four times during Netanyahu's speech to Congress the two houses rose in virtually unanimous applause. After one such interruption, it took five minutes before he could return to his text. And his were not anodyne words. Speaking of Jerusalem, he said, "There have been efforts to redivide this city by those who claim that peace can come through division—that it can be secured through multiple sovereignties, multiple laws and multiple police forces. This is a groundless and dangerous assumption which impels me to declare today: there will never be such a redivision of Jerusalem.... We shall not drive out anyone, but neither shall we be driven out of any quarter, any neighborhood, any street of our eternal capital."

The gray suits of the State Department, those whose affinity for partition (first in Bosnia, now in Israel) congressional applause rebuked, have not served President Clinton well. It was the Warren Christopher claque, after all, that pushed the president to become a partisan in the Israeli election. It is always reckless for an American president to take sides when a friendly democracy goes to the polls. Of course, the diplomats would never have acted so brazenly were they not supremely confident that Labor would triumph. Like Shimon Peres and other members of the Israeli elite, they took every act of Palestinian terrorism as evidence that the peace process had to be accelerated. For most other Israelis, however, these incidents suggested something different—that the peace process itself may have been flawed.

The coziness between Peres's folk and the State Department extended also to Syria. One little understood element in the U.S. courtship of Hafez al-Assad is Christopher's characterological deference to tyrants. During the final White House meeting on Delta Force plans to rescue the hostages in Iran, Christopher exclaimed to Colonel Charles Beckwith, "You mean you're really going to shoot to kill? You really are?" Now, with nobody-can-count-just-how-many-trips to Assad's palace, Christopher has resurrected a dictator whose international status had been crippled by the implosion of his Soviet patron. By truckling to Assad, Christopher and his trusties, Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross and his deputy Aaron David Miller, undermined any conceivable incentive he might have had to make concessions to the Israelis. Christopher & Co. telegraphed Washington's desperation for a grand Middle East settlement and, thereby, endowed Assad with an importance out of all proportion to reality. In fact, Lebanon is his only card, and it is a weak card. It is the Lebanese who bristle under his yoke, and the world doesn't care. After a rash of terror against northern Israel initiated by Damascus-backed Islamic extremist militias, Peres launched a cowardly military action into Lebanon, meant somehow to signal the Syrians that he meant business. But Lebanese suffering meant nothing to the tyrant. And since Peres, following Christopher's lead, simply wouldn't play tough with Assad himself, the venture turned to naught—except for the hundreds of Lebanese it left dead, and the thousands it made wanderers. The Israeli electorate has rendered its own verdict on Peres's frenzy for an agreement, any kind of an agreement, with Assad. But Clinton hasn't rendered his verdict on Christopher's catalytic role in the whole failed Assad enterprise.

It is time for the secretary to go, although maybe, for sheer campaign reasons, his departure can wait till November. But there is no reason to wait to dispose of Dennis Ross, who has been drawing maps for Israel ever since James Baker saw in him a kindred sensibility. And if the Baker provenance is in itself not damning, there is the fact that Ross and the newly elected government of Israel would be like proverbial oil

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and water. A U.S. plenipotentiary so closely identified with the outgoing Labor government, and one also so clearly and personally hostile to the new prime minister himself, can only hinder Netanyahu in his already obvious struggles with Israel's national chauvinist right. And the same can be said of America's formal emissary to Israel, Ambassador Martin Indyk, resented in Israel for famously slighting the tri-millennium anniversary celebration of its capital, Jerusalem, and resented by Netanyahu's people for his unprofessional comradeship with Labor.

To his credit, President Clinton has shown in the weeks since the election that he understands that the vote represented not Israel's rejection of peace, but its choice of a different path toward it. An American foreign policy team freed from partisan antagonisms inherited from the Labor government would be positioned to tease out the more conciliatory aspects of Netanyahu's program. Netanyahu's views on modalities of peace are actually quite reasonable. He aims at a tough reciprocal peace, believing, rightly, that nothing less will be permanent. Netanyahu's view of a compromise is that for every adjustment Israel makes in territory or function the Palestinians must make a correlative trade-off in hard currency, that is, in turf or in political responsibilities, and say so. They must also honor their obligations. There are all kinds of graspable reasons for why they won't or can't. But these reflect on their willingness or capacity to be real partners in peace, and, therefore, will not impress Israel's government, and should not impress ours.

"War never leaves where it found a people," wrote Edmund Burke in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. The consequences of the 100 years war the Arabs waged against Zionism, of the near-50 years war they have waged against Israel, cannot be nullified by a piece of paper called peace. To the extent that Israel has already yielded much of what it won in a battle it didn't start, the Arabs must also explicitly concede some of what they lost in that battle. This is what Suha Arafat, the chairman's wife, refused to do when she told an Arabic newspaper recently that she favored the Egyptian model for peace with Israel, a treaty but no normalization. It is not enough. History cannot be annulled: victory also has some prerogatives.

Netanyahu's most troublesome audiences in the U.S. were with American Jews dismayed by the further impositions his three religious-party coalition partners aspire to make on Israel's plural society. These anxieties are real, though, fortunately, they are not properly a concern of the Department of State. Neither are Netanyahu's planned economic reforms, except insofar as they permit him to abjure, as he has promised, U.S. economic aid. He said in Washington that the Hebrew language has no word for deregulation. Soon, he assured, it will. The first real free marketeer to serve as Israel's prime minister, and the first head of a regional power to feel comfortable with an economy based in science, Netanyahu knows that Israel needs peace to secure its position as a major player in technology and the life sciences. But he also knows that the Arab countries, those with grand histories of old and those with almost no histories at all, will likely be left behind by these developments. Where, after all, are the signs that any Arab country has the cultural disposition needed for scientific and industrial takeoff? Alas, these are societies which cannot make a brick let alone a microchip. This widening gap will produce deep, perhaps intractable resentment against Israel. And while it may not lead to war in the traditional sense, it may well produce more of what Israel has experienced over the last years: terror and ongoing riot. Netanyahu will not countenance calling something peace if it turns out to be a continuation of war by other means, or other names, and this is part of the reason he is now Israel's prime minister. Nor should we. •

The eager-to-please Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

THE BILL CLINTON OF THE U.N.

By David Rieff

For at least six months before the United States announced it would veto his nomination for a second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali had been running hard for re-election. Not only had he been courting his traditional patrons, the French and the Chinese, but in his travels in the Third World, particularly in Africa, he had repeatedly characterized his tenure at the U.N. as a work in progress. He needed, he insisted, another term to finish the job. "Every U.N. secretary-general has received two terms," Boutros-Ghali has said publicly. "Should I—the first African—not get a second?"

Boutros-Ghali once said, in a since oft-quoted

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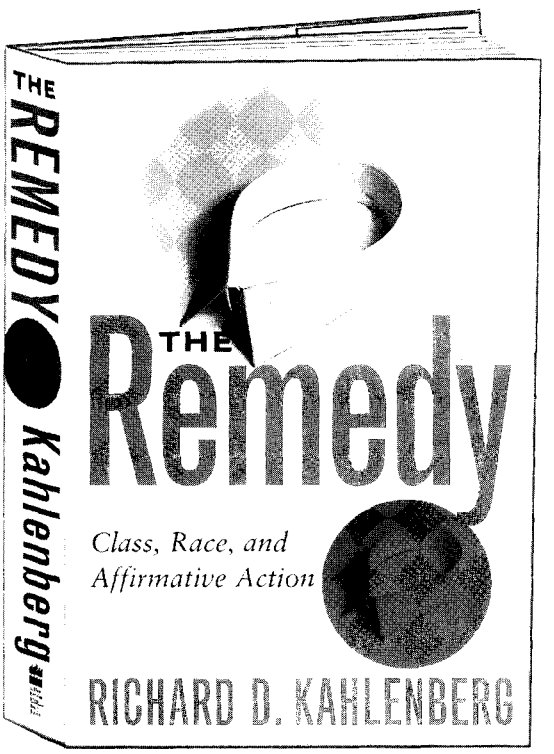
Is class, not race, the key to fixing affirmative action?

Affirmative action, the 1960s' answer to the legacy of discrimination faced by African Americans, other minorities and women has devolved into an unending racial spoils system.

Richard D. Kahlenberg, a Fellow at the Center for National Policy, presents the most cogent argument yet for replacing this badly flawed program with one that ensures fairness and equity. No mere critic, the author offers a fully-realized blueprint for change based on economic need, not gender or race. His visionary plan is must reading for all those concerned with the future of economic opportunity and race relations in America.



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—Mark Shields, syndicated columnist and chief political analyst, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*

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remark, that he imposed discipline on his subordinates through "stealth and sudden violence," and tales of his high-handedness—and of that of his top aide, Haitian diplomat Jean-Claude Aime—abound. Recently, even the most senior U.N. officials have had to clear speaking engagements with Aime's office. Those viewed as potential rivals for the Secretary-Generalship have often found their requests denied, sometimes at the last possible moment. According to a number of U.N. officials, even Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian Under-Secretary-General who currently heads the U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations and whom the U.S. favors to replace Boutros-Ghali, is not exempt from these restrictions. Ostensibly, Aime's installation as gatekeeper stems from the need to have the U.N. "speak with a common voice." In reality, it's to help re-elect the Secretary General.

At Boutros-Ghali's United Nations, as at the old Soviet Politburo, even officials who disagree privately with the Secretary's decisions have publicly hewed with craven uniformity to the party line. Long ago, Boutros-Ghali forced out the most independent spirits at the U.N., such as former Assistant Secretary-General for General Political Affairs Giandomenico Picco. Others, including some who have been publicly loyal but are still seen as too autonomous, such as Alvaro de Soto of Peru, who negotiated the Salvador peace accords, are, by many accounts, increasingly marginalized. Still others hold their tongues. "This was never a place where people spoke frankly," said a senior U.N. official, "but under Boutros-Ghali the fear is palpable." And for good reason: stealth and sudden violence work.

In his singleminded pursuit of re-election, Boutros-Ghali resembles no one more than President Clinton. Each administration has distinguished itself by its consistent privileging of the search for political advantage over the commitment to any firm set of principles. It's not that the U.N. Secretary-General has no principles. Rather, like Clinton, he seems too willing to shift them according to the prevailing winds. "Politics *is* policy," the in-house slogan of the 1996 Clinton campaign, has been, for Boutros-Ghali, the operating principle of his tenure.

At the beginning of his term, for example, Boutros-Ghali thought the great powers wanted an expansive new definition of U.N. peacekeeping, one that threw out the old notion that blue helmets could be deployed only after cease-fires had been arranged. He produced *An Agenda for Peace*, a document that made such sweeping claims for the U.N.'s role that it fueled the paranoia of the American right. Then, after the Bosnia and Somalia debacles, *An Agenda for Peace* suddenly acquired a postscript that effectively retracted all the grandiose claims the Secretary-General had put forward less than four years before. Remarkably, the postscript was added without even acknowledging that the U.N. had failed in either place. (For Boutros-Ghali, the U.N. never fails. If anything, the world fails it.)

Such maneuvers are vintage Boutros-Ghali. On the one hand, he occasionally offers up florid Bandung-style rhetoric (the West was hard on him, he once claimed, because he is seen as "a wog") and claims to be a man of the disfranchised, even though his grandfather was prime minister of Egypt and his brother is said to be one of that country's richest men. Yet, as the few remaining hard-left officials within the Secretariat point out privately, his tenure has been marked largely by his unwillingness to antagonize any of the permanent five members of the Security Council. Again like Clinton, he has been too eager to please.

As Bosnia and Rwanda demonstrated, the U.N. Secretariat does not know what it stands for. In Bosnia, it chose peace at all costs, even at the price of justice. In Rwanda, its representatives collaborated with a regime many of whose leaders were publicly planning a genocide. The problem was that what the Americans wanted in Bosnia was different from what the French and the British wanted. And in Rwanda, the French government actually sided with those perpetrating the genocide, while the Americans wanted no part of an intervention. So the U.N. Secretariat in both cases felt it had to do as little as possible, in a vain effort to offend neither the Americans nor the French. In other instances, too, when major rifts have opened between the Americans and the British and French, or between the Americans and the Chinese, Boutros-Ghali tried to satisfy all parties. He has gotten into trouble because he hasn't quite known which great power to be servile to without offending some other power whose interests he also wanted to serve.

Of course, the job of Secretary-General is not well defined in the U.N. Charter. The Secretary-General is expected to be, simultaneously, a world leader, the premier international civil servant, a voice of moral authority standing for ideals of the U.N. Charter and a politician responsive to both the great powers and the numerous poor nations that make up the bulk of the membership. One almost feels sorry for Boutros-Ghali—were it possible, that is, to forget his assertion to the Sarajevans at the height of their city's siege in December, 1992, that he could easily list ten places in the world where people were far worse off.

Although it is not surprising that the U.S. should want to replace Boutros-Ghali, it is unclear what kind of a successor can be found. The process of choosing a Secretary-General is, after all, idiotic. The Security Council's struggle to agree upon a candidate combines the secrecy of Vatican succession with the backroom dealmaking of 1920s American political conventions, and the subsequent presentation of the candidate to the General Assembly for ratification exhibits all the democracy of the old Soviet Union. The process, in other words, is geared to producing disastrous choices like Boutros-Ghali or, before him, Kurt Waldheim, who, it should be remembered, was only narrowly prevented from winning a third term.

The Clinton administration did not make up its

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mind about a course of action until June. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, had long been opposed to renomination, but others, at the State Department and the National Security Council, were uncertain. Some considered tabling altogether the discussion of Boutros-Ghali's re-election, which formally takes place in December, until after the United States' own November elections. Some within the administration clung to the hope that the Secretary-General would take himself out of the running.

When it became clear that Boutros-Ghali wouldn't step down voluntarily, it was, by most accounts, domestic policy considerations that prodded the Clinton administration to act quickly. Bob Dole had already used Boutros-Ghali's unpopularity with the American public to useful effect during the Bosnia debate, and he was poised to do so again. For the Clinton re-election team, the Secretary-General's renomination needed a "proactive" response.

BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Initially, the U.S. had sought a deal. In a private meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Boutros-Ghali, who five years ago agreed to serve only one term, was offered another year in office if he would not seek a full second term. The extra year would allow a longer and less contentious search for a consensus candidate. To the surprise of Christopher and his aides, Boutros-Ghali rejected the offer out of hand. And he apparently did so with such haughtiness that even the usually phlegmatic Christopher lost his temper. It was Christopher who insisted the U.S. announce its intention to veto Boutros-Ghali's candidacy. The decision was leaked in a background briefing by a senior State Department official that some have alleged was Christopher himself.

The Clinton administration had defused a Dole campaign issue, and both Christopher and Albright were satisfied. Yet the Americans managed to botch the diplomatic end of the process by failing to alert the French of their decision. French officials are furious. Boutros-Ghali, who once studied at the Sorbonne, has always enjoyed firm French backing. And yet the Chirac government learned of the U.S. decision only shortly before it was leaked to the American press. This needless offense to the most pro-American French government since the days of the Fourth Republic, a government with which the U.S. is involved in a great many important negotiations, was so hapless as to be incomprehensible.

Nor is it certain that the candidate American officials favor, Kofi Annan, will win French and Chinese backing. Washington is assuming that the Third World will not back an aristocratic Copt over a sub-Saharan African. But Annan is widely seen, in the words of one European diplomat skeptical about his chances, as "Washington's African." Whether China and France will support him remains to be seen. And even though the Clinton administration has opposed Boutros-Ghali, the inept way it handled the announcement does not inspire confidence in its ability to push Annan's nomination through.

There are compromise candidates who might step in, as dark-horse candidate Javier Perez de Cuellar did in 1981 when Kurt Waldheim, backed by the Chinese for a third term, and the U.S.-supported Tanzanian diplomat Salim Salim were deadlocked. The most likely such candidate is Sadako Ogata, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Ogata has disavowed interest in the post, although it is unclear how she would respond were she subject to intense pressure to run. But, while Ogata's personality and character would be crucial assets for the job, it is not clear that *anyone*, even someone far more morally and temperamentally suited to it than Boutros-Ghali, can do the job of Secretary-General as it is presently understood.

This is why it is more than a little disingenuous for American officials now to complain about Boutros-Ghali, all his faults notwithstanding. For Boutros-Ghali

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is the product of a U.N. system the U.S. government doesn't want changed. The U.S. and the other great powers want an official whom the public will admire, who will seem to stand for something morally and who will be a good administrator. They also want someone who will cover up for them, do what they tell him or her to do and put the best face on decisions of the international community—such as allowing the genocide of the Rwandan Tutsi to continue unimpeded or allowing a prolonged siege of Sarajevo—that are utterly indefensible morally.

These are irreconcilable requirements. Perhaps the world will be lucky and Ogata will accept the job. Even Annan, for all his limitations, is certainly preferable to Boutros-Ghali, if only because he would arrest the demoralization of the Secretariat staff that Boutros-Ghali's tyrannical and capricious management has engendered.

To throw up one's hands about such an appointment, even if the U.N. isn't the central institution its apologists claim it to be, hardly seems sensible. And yet there is little reason to imagine that Boutros-Ghali's ouster will bring about real reform anytime soon. •

Sex, violence, Allah and the American dream.

TAXIS AND THE MEANING OF WORK

By Stephen Glass

Step into Edward Murdock's cab and you step into a different decade. The vehicle is immaculate. Light jazz and the aroma of his English cigarettes create a soothing atmosphere. Calling cards are available in a dispenser on the dashboard. Murdock wears a tweed jacket, tie and fedora. He calls passengers sir or madam and engages them in polite conversation about politics, sports or history. If they appear busy, he remains silent. Passenger after passenger, without prompting, remarks about the service. "This is like the taxis my father used to take me to see baseball in, during the '50s," says Earl, an elderly Atlantan in Washington on business. But Murdock, who has been driving a cab for fifty-six years, doesn't consider Earl's comments a compliment. "It's really an indication of how far we've fallen," he says.

Murdock recalls his entry into the business. He points to his polished shoes and talks about standing barefoot in a bread line with his father during the Depression. "My feet were killing me," he says, drawing on his cigarette. "They were scraped and cut. Bleeding between the toes. My only pair of shoes were only worn for church." When Murdock turned 18, back in 1938, he concluded that the only way to insure his family against such destitution was to open his own business. He quit his dollar-a-day job delivering ice and became a hack. Working tirelessly, he saved a small fortune and—despite only a seventh-grade education—became the first in his family to own his own home. He paid for five of his six children to attend college. The sixth joined the army.

In the last two decades the taxi business has changed radically, from a respected profession to one so scorned that the dispatcher lingo for "driver" is "dog." Twenty years ago, Washington D.C.'s cabbies were primarily American blacks. Today, the local United Taxicab Operators Association estimates, less than 10 percent of the city's cab drivers are U.S.-born blacks, and almost all of them are middle-aged or older. Instead, as any stand-up comedian will tell you, it is immigrants—largely from south and central Asia and Africa—who pilot America's taxis.

Only thirteen years ago, a Hollywood sitcom could still depict cabbies as overwhelmingly American-born. In James L. Brooks's "Taxi," Judd Hirsch was the philosopher of the road, earning a blue-collar income and forging family-like ties with his coworkers. Many of Hirsch's fellow hacks at the Sunshine Cab Company were boy-next-door types: one moonlit at an art gallery, another was a washed-up but charming boxer, a third was a struggling actor. The only buffoonish character was the garage's sole immigrant, Andy Kaufman's Latka Gravas, a mechanic who became famous for speaking in unintelligible English. But today, the all-American image is gone and the Latkas—and the Rajas, Rafiks and Mohammeds—have taken over the business.

Edward Murdock has an explanation for this. Today's poor African American youth, the largest underemployed working-age population in big cities like Washington, don't make the calculation that Murdock and his equally disadvantaged contemporaries made: that grueling work, like cab-driving, is better than no work; that even if the short-term benefits of such toil are meager, the long-term gains are worth waiting for. "If they took up driving," Murdock says of poor black youths

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today, "they could get out of the ghetto. It's a confusion of respect and the dignity in working hard."

Lately, the meaning of work has become central to what politicians and pundits like to call "the national conversation": in the debates over welfare, worker retraining, the rejuvenation of the AFL-CIO under a new leadership, or the threats of downsizing and immigration. It would appear that work—any work, since all work brings dignity and economic reward—has become an overwhelming priority throughout American society. Or almost any work. When it comes to hard work, physical work or dirty work, the attractions are no longer quite so obvious. In 1978, at the American Enterprise Institute, Jesse Jackson explained that dirty work was better than no work, since it paid in long-term benefits. But his advice has not been universally accepted, not least in his own community. Take household jobs, like maids and gardeners. It used to be that these jobs were the first rung to financial security and social acceptance. People toiled at them so they, or their children, could gain full membership in the larger community. Among poor Americans, however, this is no longer the general rule.

It is immigrants—from India, Pakistan and Ethiopia—who have filled the void. Jobs such as cab driving, they say, are the way to become American. The Washington licensing commission doesn't keep demographic information on hacks, but the Operators Association estimates more than 85 percent of all Washington drivers are foreign-born—up more than 60 percent in the past twenty-five years.

In pursuing their American dream, immigrant taxi drivers endure grueling and dangerous work—the most dangerous work in America, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Hacks often drive seventeen hours a day, six days a week, in cramped cars. Those who get stiffed by a passenger are thankful they weren't mugged; those who get mugged feel lucky they weren't killed. For decades, native-born blacks also accepted such risks in pursuit of upward mobility. Why don't they anymore?

Of all taxi systems, Washington is perhaps the best place to examine this question. With little regulation and—unlike most major cities—no cap on the number of licenses, nearly anyone can get a hack permit. Here, unlike in New York and Chicago, the shift in demographics can't be blamed on $150,000 licenses or discrimination. Turf wars between rival companies are comparatively rare and, with more business travelers and tourists arriving each year, business is brisk.

Becoming a taxi driver in Washington begins in a second-floor classroom at the University of the District of Columbia's satellite campus, a shabby room bathed in shades of green: the walls are the color of hospital scrubs, the chairs lime green, the desks a hue akin to toothpaste. The chalkboards are, of course, green. An equally tattered-looking 68-year-old black teacher presides. A dozen men, ranging in age from 25 to 65, are oblivious to one another, most of them sitting about three seats apart. "MR. FRED TURNER. TAXICAB DRIVER'S PROGRAM. CAPITOL CAB #155" is written on the board.

"Welcome to cab school," Turner grumbles as he begins the routine he repeats with each new class. "Tell me who you are, where you're from, and why you want to be a taxi driver." In barely audible speech the dozen students identify seven foreign countries. Eight of the twelve have to repeat themselves to be understood. A few say they want to make more money, others want flexible hours, two want to be their own boss and one begins a complicated story about his mother before realizing he can't express the details sufficiently in English.

Turner nods without really acknowledging them. Having clocked nearly a half-century driving cabs, none of the exotic homelands is new to him. "Too bad there is no one from Sierra Leone," Turner laments in a stage whisper. "I would have given them an A for sure." He explains his cryptic comment, speaking loudly and deliberately, pausing between words like an American tourist lost abroad. "Let's be honest. You are foreign. It is a permanent condition. They will know it. If you are lucky, they will ask you where you're from," he says. "Most will just tell you to go back. Tell them you are from Sierra Leone. They're annoyed with drivers from Pakistan, Ethiopia, India, Afghanistan and all the other places you're from. But Sierra Leone.... Reminisce about beautiful sand beaches with topless women."

Turner, a burly man, raises his hands above his head and does a slight hula dance in his chair, "Make it a fucking honeymoon," he recommends, as much for his own amusement as for the edification of his pupils. "They'll tip you better." During the class's bathroom break, Turner elaborates. "I want to help," he says, sympathizing with the immigrant drivers. "They'll never be respected, so their best bet is to confuse."

After the intermission, Turner begins the next subject:

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personal hygiene and its correlation with tips and sex. Would-be cabbies have to be taught the basics. "There are some very good people, wonderful people, who do not take baths often enough," the textbook states. "They do not use deodorant.... They fail to change their underwear." Turner makes it clear: you should *not* be one of these "wonderful people." He urges student drivers to play a sexy jazz station on the radio and wear cologne to get a bigger tip. "Plus, if you're not clean," he adds, "you'll never get to touch her meters."

When the students have left, Turner says he's dismayed at what's happened to the black community. Like Edward Murdock, he believes that young blacks view cab driving as shameful work. "The smartest of us," he says, "have become doctors and lawyers. The others dream of being basketball stars or something. They don't really want to work as hard as I do." The comment has an air of self-congratulation, like any grandfather-type grousing about kids these days. But it contains some truth as well.

Ethiopian-born cabbie James Smith has witnessed the change in hack demographics firsthand. Fresh out of agriculture graduate school, Smith was analyzing crops at a Virginia farm when communists seized his hometown. His mother told him to stay in America until peace was restored. Despite his graduate degree, Smith had trouble finding professional work and bounced between dishwashing and low-level airport jobs. In 1977, he got his hack license. Soon after, Smith took the English name to fit in with American-born black drivers, who at the time dominated the industry. Smith demonstrates the change by flipping on his two-way radio. Amid the fuzz, drivers' words crackle in Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic and Twi. The only English on the channels are proper nouns and new words like "Internet" and "microwave."

While Smith is not ashamed of being an immigrant, he plays it down when driving. He keeps the radio's volume to a minimum and talks about his years in Washington. "You do this job because you know it's the right thing to do here," Smith says, pointing to his heart.

Jim, on the other hand—a dashing African American in his mid-30s from Anacostia—drove a cab five years ago but has since changed jobs. "I was sick of smelling all those curry people," he sneers. "It is low class." His neighbors, he says, would point and laugh when he parked his taxi outside his home. Now he drives for one of Washington's largest limousine companies, where he chauffeurs senators and diplomats, the capital's upper crust. "Now," he says of his peers, "they respect me.... If I pull up in this baby," he adds, caressing the hood with one hand and pointing at a beautiful woman with the other, "I can get that babe. Wanna see me try?" Jim shuffles up to the slinky blonde. He speaks to her. She responds. They talk some more. She nods. She walks over to the car and examines the limo's luxurious interior and wet bar. I interrupt. Would she be equally attracted to a taxi driver? I ask. "What am I on? Some TV show?" she asks, startled, and clomps away. Jim, annoyed, cuts off our interview. While Jim's alleged successes may be little more than locker-room boasting, his rationale for shunning taxis for limos is nonetheless telling. His professional calculus is external and immediate. It is what a 62-year-old black driver called the "woo quotient: How fast can you get in someone's pants?"

Another reason many young black men disdain cab-driving, according to Slippy—a 28-year-old black high-school dropout who has been a hack for one year—is the "*Driving Miss Daisy* mentality." In the hit off-Broadway show and movie, a black chauffeur and his elderly white employer form a friendship unalterably limited by the barriers of privilege and race. "Most of my peers want to know why they should drive a lot of rich white people everywhere they want to go," Slippy says. "For generations this is the only job blacks could get, now they don't want to do it." While this resentment keeps blacks out of the drivers' seats of cabs, he says the trappings of limo driving—particularly the car and access to power—compensate.

When I press Slippy for details about this resentment, he says that other inner-city options are far more esteemed than taxi-driving. "Haven't you reporters taken economics? If you can sell something," he says slyly, "and make much, much more money and probably not get caught, and not be dissed, who wouldn't? Well, a lot of people do that equation every day. And cab driving is lot more dangerous." On a ten-hour day, Slippy grosses between $40 and $80; he says no friends respect his job. Respect for the drug dealer however, comes not from the work itself but from what it produces: a bulging wallet, an expensive car, nice clothes and women. For Edward Murdock and the entrepreneurial immigrants in Fred Turner's class, the goal is to own their own business, to be their own boss, to find an inherent dignity in the possibilities their work affords, not in the admiration of others.

While Jim, the blonde-chasing limo driver, enjoys boasting that he is no longer driving a "hot box" cab, few immigrant cabbies would trade places with him. Taxi driving, unlike limousine chauffeuring, is for entrepreneurs. While few chauffeurs own their limos, cabs offer immigrants their own businesses—cheap. Few people have the capital to start a small shop, but many more can afford the $100 for taxi school. After they pass, the new drivers can buy a used car for several thousand dollars, or rent one for about $150 a week. This open-entry cab system has been so successful that nearly 90 percent of the city's taxis are driven by their owner. Most pay a small monthly fee to rent a large company's colors and radio dispatch services.

Everyone benefits. Drivers appreciate the low hurdle to cab ownership. Passengers like the cheapest fares in the country. According to the International Taxi Association, the average three-mile ride costs $6 in Los Angeles and $3.70 in New York, but only $2.45 in D.C. What's more, there are more cabs per capita in Washington than in any other major city. New York has 1.6 cabs for every

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thousand people; Washington has 12.3 per thousand.

"It's so much work, but I'm rewarded for it. It's the American dream," explains Raja Afan, a new cab driver. When the 59-year-old Pakistani moved to the United States several years ago, he took a job behind the counter at, yes, a 7-11 convenience store. "It wasn't that hard, but where was I going?" he says. Some friends brought him to taxi school, he passed the exam, and he now rents a cab. If he saves his money, Afan thinks, he'll be able to own a taxi in a year or two. On average, two days of work pays the taxi's weekly rent. After Tuesday, every fare is money he can pocket.

Afan has big plans. Someday, he'd like to own a fleet of cabs. Meanwhile, though, he drives eighty-five hours a week to save. When he gets bored, tired or discouraged, he replays in his mind his vision of Afan Cab Service. He knows it may never happen and if it does, it won't be easy, but that doesn't deter him. "I want to be an American," he says. "And this is what it takes."

It's not that immigrants like Afan receive much recognition for their labors among passengers or the culture at large, but they have other, internal support systems. Intricate social networks and a heavy dependence on religion—common to immigrants in many industries—are obvious to even the most casual hack observer. Without them, the risks inherent in taxi driving might prove unbearable.

Sayed Farid, a short balding Pakistani driver, was robbed at knifepoint two years ago by a passenger who also ate Farid's lunch and dumped the hapless driver in a forest thirty miles outside Washington. Farid was back on the road the next day. He says he's lucky because he isn't Asad Alanan. Alanan, a dead ringer for Farid except that he's taller, points to his scarred ear, which was grazed by a bullet fired by a passenger annoyed that Alanan didn't have more cash on hand for him to steal. Then again, Alanan thinks *he's* lucky because he's not Ejay Eswan. Four months ago, a 17-year-old held a gun to Eswan's head while his girlfriend performed oral sex on the gunman. The couple then stole Eswan's money and, for kicks, locked him in his trunk. He was found fourteen hours later. Yet, believe it or not, Eswan, too, feels lucky, simply to be alive.

Like almost all offenses against cabbies, none of these crimes was reported. Since all three men were driving illegally, either in friends' or relatives' cabs, they feared getting fined or jailed themselves if they went to the police. A National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety study released in July found taxi driving the most dangerous job in America—almost four times more deadly than being a police officer. From 1990 to 1992, nearly twenty-three of every 100,000 hacks were killed on the job. That's up from fifteen in 1980s. Security guards rank less than six.

One night, around midnight, Imran—a Pakistani hack in his mid-40s—became sick of waiting in the airport's taxi pit for a delayed flight to arrive. After losing two games of chess, he got into his car and pulled out of line. The day's earnings had been lighter than he had hoped, less than $50, and a friend to whom he owed money was coming by the next morning to collect. Imran hoped to round up another couple of fares before calling it a night. Suddenly, his luck seemed to change. Passengers outside bars in Dupont Circle and Adams Morgan flagged him down. They had short trips to neighboring zones, but the tipsy customers were being generous. After several runs, and well after the time he told his wife he'd be home, Imran stopped at a bank machine to withdraw the remaining cash he needed to pay his friend.

I was riding with Imran that night, and he was about to drop me off at home when a black man in his early to mid-20s hailed the taxi. It was late. The man on the corner was listening to a walkman. The cab's headlights illuminated his bright white high-tops. This is the type of fare Imran would normally refuse. But there was a pair of police cars on the neighboring corner, and Imran said he didn't want to risk getting a ticket for passing up a rider based on his race. As in many other cities, to insure against discrimination, Washington has deemed it illegal for a cabbie to pass up any customer. Imran pulled up. From the front passenger seat, I could hear the music banging through the passenger's headphones. Unable to judge the volume of his voice, the rider screamed, "Martin Luther King and V," located in one of Washington's poorest neighborhoods, as his destination.

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Over the next ten minutes, Imran and I became engrossed in a conversation about his children, ignoring our backseat companion. We passed the White House. Imran's son is in the third grade. Georgetown Law was on our right. The boy has a knack for math. Union Station was coming up on our left. But Imran was worried about his older daughter. Now heading toward Eastern Market. I began to ask, "What grade. . . ."

"Pull over, cocksucker!"

". . . is she in?"

"Shut the fuck up, you motherfucker." That sentence was directed at me. I didn't notice, at first, the knife our passenger was now holding up to Imran's neck. Imran was cool and mechanical. He pulled the car over to the right and reached into his breast pocket, handing over the neatly folded bills. The mugger made Imran stop the car and throw the keys out the window. He ran off. A few minutes later Imran recovered the keys.

"These things happen," Imran said coldly on the drive back downtown. "I give them whatever they want. I just want my life." For the next hour or so, Imran and a couple of friends drink beer. This crime, like the others, would never be reported. "If I tell the cops, it'll take all day, and they'll do nothing. Then he'll have stolen two days of my pay." Crimes such as these could be financially crippling, but Imran's friends lend him money so he won't have to tell his wife. He doesn't want her to know how dangerous his job is.

The conversation among Imran and his friends turns to the legend of Kae Bang, a Korean cab-driver-turned-vigilante who is to the D.C. cab community what Stagger Lee was to the Mississippi Delta. As Kae Bang's story goes, the cab driver was, one sticky summer night, bludgeoned on the head by three brick-wielding black teenagers. Bang quickly recovered and, using his martial arts expertise, struck back at the would-be thieves, hurting them badly. Everyone knows Bang's story, or at least a version of it—in some, he is a Chinese immigrant, in others he's hit with a pipe—but no one knows how to find him. Everyone knows someone who claims to have once met him, but those leads typically turn up just more names of other people who have supposedly met Bang. Bang is not registered to drive with any taxi company. While he is listed in the Maryland suburban phonebook, messages are never returned. Eventually I found him, due mostly to luck. After hours of watching for him in a diner that he's rumored to frequent, I decided to head home. The cab I hailed was his.

Bang is Washington's most respected taxi driver. A loner, he is largely unaware of the legendary status of his fight. Years later, he still wears the beige zip-up jacket he wore that day. A stitched rip near the right shoulder is the only remaining evidence of where the brick struck him. Bang's speech sounds as if it has been dubbed. Each syllable is painfully sounded out. "There is no respect for nobody in this country. What did I do wrong to them, the robbers?"

Many drivers can't understand why muggers would be compelled to take their money. "Don't they understand I worked hard for it?" one cabbie asked me, touchingly bewildered. Among drivers, mugging isn't seen as a way for a desperate poor person to get a quick buck; it's an attack on the system. The criminals show no respect for what is theirs.

"You have to want the American dream bad, real bad," Rafik Remzan says, sitting on the hood of his car in the bowels of Washington's National Airport. Remzan and many of the other drivers in National's taxi pit—the same garage where Imran was spinning his wheels before my hair-raising adventure with him—make only airport runs. While the dead time waiting in line is high, and fares are frequently low, drivers say the risk is substantially reduced.

Just off the tarmac, under an American Airlines gate, is one of the city's least known temples. Here, in the bi-level cement garage, countless taxis are penned in for hours on end. Packed bumper to bumper, the garage sometimes looks as if it's about to burst. Yet a small plot in one corner always stays empty. Four times a day, Muslims congregate there to pray to Allah. (The garage doesn't open early enough for the dawn ritual.) Nearly every driver participates, although some, seeking privacy, pray in the backseats of their cars. Some dispatchers hold off releasing cabs to the terminal until the prayers are done. Muhammad, a 48-year-old accountant-turned-hack from Afghanistan, prays here every evening before making his overnight run. He says he can't overstate the importance of religion to the profession. Cab bumper stickers herald Allah. Taxis line up outside Muslim mosques. Icons grace nearly every dashboard.

According to Muhammad, Islam is what keeps hacks on the road. "The world gives us nothing. It spits on us," Muhammad says. "But we find honor in God. He tells us to work, and that is enough." Muhammad describes the disparate nationalities and ages of drivers as evidence of Islam's power to unite. "These people come from nations that hate each other, like Ethiopia and Eritrea. But here they are one, in the service of God. Our common language is religion." Religion also allows the drivers to find a higher purpose in their work. It justifies delaying their gratification.

When I spoke with the elusive Kae Bang, I asked him his plans for the future. For such a legendary figure, they are surprisingly mundane—not all too different from Edward Murdock's. He says he plans to return to South Korea when his daughter finishes college. He meticulously saves his money so she can afford law school and become a "real American professional."

Bang is pained by the embarrassment his daughter feels about his job. On her college application, she did not fill in the blank asking her father's occupation. "She'll go to Harvard Laws, and then I go home. In Korea, I will not be an animal." In the meantime, says the devout Baptist, he's relying on God to keep him alive. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Gulf crisis

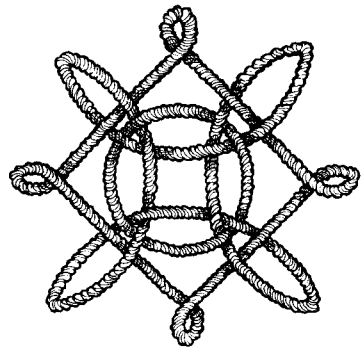
For much of the last decade, academic and public debate has focused intensely on whether multiculturalism—sometimes interpreted as healthy pluralism, sometimes as frightening division—is leading, in Arthur Schlesinger's words, to the "The Disuniting of America." But lost in the arguments over race, gender and immigration is the threat to American culture posed by a different division: the one between rich and poor. A recent U.S. Census Bureau report reveals that in 1994, the last year for which complete data are available, the richest 20 percent of Americans earned close to 50 percent of the country's total income while the poorest 20 percent earned only a little more than 5 percent.

Though we've come to treat such news as inevitable, it isn't. The free movement of capital, labor and commodities obviously makes for inequality, but not necessarily for the gulf we now see in the U.S. While inequality has been increasing for the past twenty-five years, before that it declined for several decades. The reasons for both the recent increase and the previous decline are more political than economic.

The modestly increasing egalitarianism of American society in the 1940s and '50s depended on what John Kenneth Galbraith called "countervailing power." A key example was the power of the labor movement to counter corporate America's search for profits. The development of this balance, Galbraith wrote forty-four years ago in *American Capitalism*, is a "normal economic process." But Galbraith recognized that, to succeed, countervailing power requires the intervention of the state. Workers organize naturally to strengthen their market position, but they will just as naturally be repressed by owners and managers unless they receive political protection.

Today's income inequality stems from a dramatic loss of such protection. Despite a recent spate of good publicity stemming from the AFL-CIO's effective attacks on Republican congressional candidates, labor's influence remains in deep decline. Ronald Reagan's 1981 replacement of striking air traffic controllers crippled the effectiveness of strikes, and their frequency has diminished substantially in recent years. Bill Clinton's unfulfilled 1992 campaign promise to outlaw the hiring of replacement workers notwithstanding, the federal government remains indifferent to labor's plight. And labor's weakness has made possible a series of aggressive campaigns—first by the Reagan administration, and now by the Gingrich Congress—on behalf of greater inequality. These campaigns—which combine a celebration of the free market with attacks on government regulation, federal welfare entitlements and the progressive income tax—combine theory and practice in ways that would have made the old left envious.

Business's need to remain globally competitive is part of the reason for these campaigns, but, more importantly, it is the rationale. No doubt, the new global economy poses a hard question: How much room to maneuver do national governments have in regulating their economies and providing welfare services? The example of our European and Asian competitors, who face the same pressures to cut public spending, suggests there is, given the political will, at least room enough to avoid the kinds of inequality now developing in the U.S. Third World standards (sweat shops, unenforced safety rules, intensified discipline on the shop floor, loss of health insurance, lower wages, and so on) are not being imposed on American workers to "save" their jobs. The imposition has at least something to do with the prospect of Third World fortunes for American owners and managers.



Galbraith describes countervailing power as a feature of American capitalism. It is better described, it seems to me, as a feature of liberal democracy, a political order that systematically limits the use of power. The limits work in the market only if they work in state and society as well. They depend upon civic responsibility and popular liveliness as much as upon entrepreneurial invention.

The kind of inequality toward which we are drifting will make it harder to sustain this responsible and lively public. With rare exceptions, men and women do not enter the political arena on their own. They come in parties and movements, organized for a purpose, defending their interests and ideals. We still have groups like that: feminists, environmentalists, Christian rightists, and so on. But the news media's homogenization of American life, and the resulting erosion of distinctive working-class cultures, means that material interests and egalitarian ideals are difficult to defend today, difficult even to represent coherently. Hence the general decrease in political participation, especially at lower educational and income levels.

What follows from this decline is uncertain. One possibility is populism of a kind that has long been absent from American life: a frightened, angry and disorganized mass periodically mobilized by demagogues, cult figures and tinhorn charismatics. This kind of populism, perhaps foreshadowed by Pat Buchanan, Ross Perot and Louis Farrakhan, is the product of a certain sort of inequality: where the differences are radical, where they are not mediated by strong middling groups, where the "lower orders" are without their own institutions or habits of collective action.

So inequality is dangerous for liberal democracy. And the dangers are self-perpetuating: disparities of wealth make it difficult to organize countervailing powers, and the absence of countervailing powers makes for increasingly radical disparities. The long-term effect of this process, the characteristic product of radical inequality, is tyranny in everyday life: the arrogance of the wealthy, the humbling of the poor. We are not there yet, but the demonizing of "welfare mothers," the challenge to universal entitlements such as Medicare and Social Security, the drift toward means-tested, stigmatized welfare programs like AFDC and Medicaid—these are early examples of social tyranny. That there is so little resistance to these trends suggests we are already feeling the cumulative impact of inequality.

Democracy is at risk when the fellowship of citizens resonates so weakly, when we are so unready to come to each other's aid. Yet we still have a fairly strong economy, a multitude of voluntary associations and social movements, large numbers of politically competent men and women, a basically liberal state with constitutional protections for dissent and protest. We still have a fundamentally decent politics. What the Census Bureau report means is that all this is at risk. And our political system is paralyzed when it comes to addressing it. I am not sure about specific policies, but we might well begin by reviving the theory and practice of countervailing power.

MICHAEL WALZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Conflicts and Clones

Whatever else is the case, John Sayles is a constant astonishment in at least one way. No other writer-director that I can remember, past or present, has had his range. Former college radicals; lesbianism; baseball; sci-fi; labor history; urban problems—these are only some of his subjects since he began making films in 1980.

Versatility doesn't of course guarantee quality. *The Brother from Another Planet* was clumsy. *Eight Men Out* needed more iron. *Matewan,* about miners' troubles in the 1920s, was his most accomplished film; but his last, *The Secret of Roan Inish,* was such a damp dollop of Irish mythology that even this Hibernophile was sickened.

Now, typically atypically, he moves to still another venue, the Tex-Mex border. **Lone Star** (Castle Rock) is a family saga with flashbacks. Instead of chronological form, it begins in the present, then interleaves what we need of the parents of the modern characters and of other relevant people. The very opening shot is archaeological. Two men—in civilian dress, but they are soldiers from a nearby base—are prospecting for bullets on an old Texas battlefield near the Mexican border. They discover a skeleton. Near it is a dirt-encrusted sheriff's badge.

Today's sheriff arrives. An investigation begins. So does the film, a tangled story that in fact involves three sheriffs: the present one, his long-dead father who is a revered figure, and the tyrannical sheriff for whom the father was once a deputy. Also prominently involved are a Mexican-American family, a black saloonkeeper and his son, who is the commander of the neighboring army base, and the problem of wetbacks—illegal Mexican immigrants.

The plot strands are more complicated than genuinely complex. All of them deal with racial prejudice, whites versus Mexicans and blacks, in varying severities, from blighted romance to casual murder. And all these tangles roll along for a while like tumbleweed in the wind until the skeleton at the start is explained. We sigh with some relief. But Sayles has still another twist to add, about the current sheriff's romance. This last twist seems almost merciless—to us and to the characters involved. Perhaps it signifies that this sheriff's sheriff-father is still affecting his life.

When it's all over, we can see why the film seemed carefully knotted and then carefully unknotted, rather than galvanized as drama. Sayles's script plays like an adaptation of a novel, like a best-seller written in the 1920s by Edna Ferber, facing up to grave social conditions with a full armory of artifice. The script is a tidy work of carpentry, in several time planes and with a tart finish.

Tense moments abound, fights and shootings and near-drownings, but they seem items drawn from casework files. Worse, those files are crammed with clichés: the tense moments are all generically familiar. Even the central thread, the current sheriff's romance, has an echo of *The Border* (1982), in which Jack Nicholson, as a federal immigration cop on this border, was smitten by a young Mexican woman.

There's one amusing film reference. The current sheriff is named Deeds and is played by Chris Cooper. An earlier Cooper, Gary, played an earlier Deeds—in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936). This Cooper, tall and taciturn, would like to be that other tall and taciturn Cooper, but he lacks the resident appeal and force: this Cooper is merely adequate. His love interest is played with dignified sexuality by Elizabeth Peña. Miriam Colon, for more than forty years an important figure in the New York Spanish-language theater, plays Peña's mother with quiet competence, and Clifton James burbles amiably as the mustached old walrus who is mayor of the town. But the key performance, made scary even though every moment of it is conventional, comes from Kris Kristofferson as the son-of-a-bitch sheriff in the past.

In the tempo of the dialogue, Sayles has fallen into a mimetic fallacy. I've been in Texas a few times and have known a few Texans elsewhere. (Some of my best friends...) So I know they often speak slowly. But Sayles falls into a tourist's exaggeration. For instance, every time Clifton James is asked a question, we know he is going to: a) peer at the questioner; b) look down at the plate of food on the table before him; c) push it slightly away; d) look up; e) brush back the left side of his moustache; and f) answer. If this film had been freed of Sayles's idea of Texan tempo, if for instance it had been set on the Canadian border, it would have been fifteen minutes shorter.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cold Comfort Farm. *English humor, 1932 style. Stella Gibbons's novel, about an airy London miss set down amidst rustic types, makes a nice crinkum-crankum treat. (Reviewed 5/27/96)* **Courage Under Fire.** *Two related military investigations after the Gulf war, with many flashbacks to combat. Less than meets the eye, but what does meet it is skillfully done. (7/29/96)* **Human Rights Watch Film Festival.** *Look for it in your area. A series of forty-one films from fifteen different countries. Most certainly worth sampling. (7/1/96)* **Who Killed Pasolini?** *The murder of this gay artist-activist by a gay hooker may have had political implications. A fine Italian docudrama explores. (7/1/96)*—**SK**

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Sayles has solved a recurrent directing problem: how to get into the past. He obviously wanted to avoid corny crossfades, so he simply panned. The camera moves from Person A, in this room today, to Person B in the same room twenty or so years ago. But Sayles was less adroit with the openings of many sequences. Repeatedly he begins with a close-up of an object that is part of a setting—a cow's skull at a trading post, a pile of tires in a used-car lot, etc.—then pulls back. It's visual echolalia that slowly nibbles away at the picture's impact.

Once again Sayles leaves us with contradictory feelings. The American film scene would be poorer without him; but it would be richer if he were more strict with himself. Fewer pictures, more thought, sterner judgment. It would be silly and impertinent to ask for more talent, but Sayles could certainly summon more rigor.

We, in our innocence, may still think that films begin with stories and that people then think of ways to put them on the screen. Nowadays many films start with the itch to use certain special effects; Step Two is to find a story that can utilize them.

Multiplicity (Columbia) exists because it's now possible for an actor to appear on screen with himself and not by means of anything so quaint as double exposure. Now it's done with lasers and morphing and other terms I could cite without understanding them. The picture has no other reason for being.

In this farce, Michael Keaton is a busy young husband, driven frantic with time pressures. He is cloned—a perfect double is created by a non-mad scientist—so now he can spend more time with his family while he's also off at work. Then come Clone 3 and Clone 4. It's the kind of plot that must inevitably involve Keaton's wife at bedtime and that also calls for a clever solution. The bedtime stuff happens; the ending is howlingly unclever. This ending could have happened a lot earlier, but then the picture wouldn't have run the requisite length.

Only one point about *Multiplicity* is notable. Keaton the First and Clone 2 are the Keaton we know. Clone 4 is a happy moron, who behaves like a naughty child. Easy to do. But Clone 3 is, we're meant to infer, gay. Keaton performs him delicately, without swish, a character drawn from observation and accomplished with tact. •

Jed Perl on Art

The Founder

Classicism, which the Greek artists invented and later epochs sometimes overlooked or rejected but never totally forgot, finds its most potent modern expression in the work of Cézanne. At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where the first full-scale Cézanne retrospective in sixty years is up until the end of the summer, this artist's genius for giving impassive forms an overwhelming emotional force may sneak up on you, because first you have to go through the artist's somewhat gauche romantic beginnings and a certain amount of dutiful naturalism. It was in the 1880s, when he was in his 40s, that Cézanne figured out how to make the impersonal personal, and from then until his death in 1906, at the age of 67, everything is amazing.

If Cézanne's work leaves museumgoers a little uneasy—and I think that is its effect—this may be the case with all the great classicists, from the anonymous sculptors of the Kouros figures to Piero della Francesca and Poussin, for they have sunk the emotion so deep into their architectural arrangements that their work can feel out of reach. Especially in his later work, the intensity that Cézanne brings to every brushstroke spins a halo around objects and figures, so that he's somehow distancing himself from the very things that he's rhapsodizing. The truest classicists offer transcendence without catharsis. It's a cool heat that rises from the agitated surfaces of Cézanne's final paintings, whether they are of his gardener Vallier or a group of anonymous bathers by a river or the humpbacked Mont Sainte-Victoire.

That the summer of 1996 has turned out to be the summer of Cézanne is a function of museum scheduling, nothing more. But it makes some sense that the hullabaloo is taking place in Philadelphia. No American city has ever made a deeper commitment to the man who is just about universally regarded as the founding father of modern art. Cézanne's final *Bathers*, which is his most explicit variation on a classical theme, has been in the Philadelphia Museum since 1937, and the museum also owns what many believe is the finest of the late Mont Sainte-Victoire paintings. The Barnes Foundation, in the Philadelphia suburb of Merion, is home to the world's largest collection of Cézannes, including another late *Bathers* and the grandest and most complex of the *Card Players*. In Philadelphia, a medium-sized metropolis with more than its share of magnificent paintings, they know their Cézanne. I felt that familiarity in the sophisticated conversations that I overheard at a museum members' preview. While Philadelphia's traditions of common sense and independent-mindedness may not generally be regarded as encouraging of the avant-garde, Benjamin Franklin's hometown isn't a bad place to contemplate the Master of Aix, a purposeful, quietly impassioned spirit who would not have been able to go his own way without the admittedly reluctant support of his father, a highly successful self-made man.

Philadelphia's affinity with Cézanne is worth keeping in mind, because it's going to be all but impossible to grasp in the frenzy of hotel and restaurant tie-ins and Cézanne CD-ROMs and beach towels and puzzles (packaged in plastic Cézannesque wine bottles) that is currently enveloping the museum and the city. That this artist, who was anything but a showman, is an utterly unlikely subject for this kind of attention is so apparent that even Sandra Horrocks, a museum spokeswoman, observed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that "Cézanne would probably hate every minute of it.... He wasn't big on crowds." Some of the hundreds of thousands of people who visit before the show closes on September 1 are going to wonder why there's all this hype around a painter who refused to overscale any emotional response. A diffident superstar has a particular fascination, but museumgoers who are waiting for Cézanne to bare his soul are bound to be disappointed. The more his paintings gain in force and stature, the more veiled and ineffable they become.

Cézanne died ninety years ago, which apparently is about how long it takes for the work of certain artists to strike us as having the disinterested grandeur that we associate with the Old Masters. Museumgoers may not feel the kind of immediate bond with Cézanne that they feel with Monet or Van Gogh, but neither will he confound them in the way that Mondrian still does. This retrospective, which has already been seen in Paris and London, is straightforwardly

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arranged, and if there is nothing magical about its hanging in galleries that are more like hallways and intersections than rooms, I'm still glad to agree with the curators' view that Cézanne's work has been so thoroughly absorbed into our consciousness that there is no need for trumped-up theatrics. Françoise Cachin of the Musée d'Orsay and Joseph J. Rishel of the Philadelphia Museum of Art have done a workmanlike job. The show isn't a revelation, and yet the rather pedestrian presentation is true to an artist who kept his own counsel as he transformed himself from an unruly talent into an unaffected genius.

Everybody who loves painting recognizes certain grand yet elusive principles of organization that continuously reassert themselves, and Cézanne ultimately had as intuitive a feeling for those mysterious movements as any artist who ever lived. To his contemporaries, he evinced many of the gruff, antisocial characteristics that marked the modern artist as an odd man out, but his egotism was not so much that of the determined outsider as that of the absolute insider. Tradition as it had been defined by such great academic artists as David and Ingres held no charms for him; and he was no more interested in the kind of avant-garde classicism that began with Puvis de Chavannes and reached its pinnacle with Seurat. For Cézanne, what was involved was nothing less than the recovery of first principles, and he wanted to stand so deep inside the tradition that he was alone there, in the way that Michelangelo, Poussin and Chardin, despite their wide influence, are furiously alone.

Cézanne's fundamentalism was recognized by a few of his contemporaries. In 1877, the critic Georges Rivière described him as "a Greek of the great period; his canvases have the calm and heroic serenity of the paintings and terracottas of antiquity." And Renoir, in 1895, compared Cézanne's paintings to "the frescoes of Pompeii, so crude and so admirable." The watercolor-like freshness of so many of Cézanne's landscapes of the 1880s and 1890s, which feel both deliberate and spontaneous, is one of the miracles of modern art. When the full range of Cézanne's achievement finally began to be seen in exhibitions in Paris around the turn of the century, it seemed as if he had returned each subject to its essentials. Academic ideas about composition and modeling and perspective that had already been transformed into the gloriously mannered idiom of Ingres and then sunk into the kitsch of Bouguereau and Meissonier turned out to be miraculously new. Doric pediments or classical shepherds were not part of this radical classicism, but Cézanne instinctively understood that his birthplace and lifelong home, Aix-en-Provence, made such allusions unnecessary. This was literally classic ground, the place where Italy and France met.

What the Philadelphia retrospective has going for it is the dumb authority of chronology, and although the curators have scrambled things a bit more than they ought to have, the show does give you a feeling for how the artist grew. The work is remarkable right from the beginning. This is not exactly a surprise, but if you arrive in Philadelphia with some general idea of Cézanne's slow, difficult progress, you may be struck by the degree to which he was always a natural painter. At the very start, when he is in his 20s, there are some forceful, lucid still lifes and portraits, done with jagged or sweeping strokes of the brush. The big portrait of an early painter friend, the dwarf Achille Emperaire, is an indelible image, poignant and strange. In the still lifes of the 1860s one already feels Cézanne's superhuman attentiveness, although at this point it can result in a certain overdetermination of the forms. Even his most loopily bizarre early fantasies, such as the orgiastic *The Feast*, with its intertwined nudes, and *Pastoral*, his remake of Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, have a wonderful, almost rococo flyaway ease. There's something winningly appealing about the wild lusciousness of the brushwork in the early Cézanne. Of course it is nothing like the plangency that he ultimately achieved, but it is a considerable gift that he did not deny so much as utterly reshape.

Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

ÉCORCHÉ AND INTERIOR WITH A CHAIR, 1887-90

Among the extraordinary facts of the Cézanne story is his youthful friendship with Zola, full of long days spent hiking in the countryside around Aix, reciting poetry and dreaming of Paris. The friendship sounds like a romantic novel, until everybody turns out to be a realist. It was Zola who damaged the already weakened link beyond repair in 1886, by depicting Cézanne as the failed painter in *L'Oeuvre*, one of the novels in his Rougon-Macquart series. Still, when one considers how hermetic a figure Cézanne became in his later years, it's a relief to know that he had once experienced the heedless intensity of a brainy, youthful friendship, with the hours flying by in plans for a glorious future. That the boys were not mistaken gives that early pastoral the silvery sheen of a fairy tale. When they were both still in their 20s, Zola, already in Paris, seemed to foresee the entire trajectory of his friend's career when he wrote in a letter to Cézanne that "one is born a poet, one becomes a worker."

The technique of painting directly from nature, which taught Cézanne to be one of the hardest workers in the history of art, was still relatively new in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Without the example of his fellow Impressionists, and especially of that most generous of all artists, Pissarro, Cézanne could never have become Cézanne. But what he was after was not the Impressionists' lowdown on nature so much as the lowdown on painting itself. While no artist ever evoked the colors and the contours of the natural world more truly or more touchingly, Cézanne was always intent on measuring those immediate sensations against what he believed to be more constant forms. The stone building in the *House in Provence, Near Gardanne*, from the late 1880s, is as solid and elemental as a building in one of Giotto's frescoes, and Giotto comes so forcibly to mind because Cézanne has worked things out for himself, from the foundations up, just as Giotto did.

When we look at Cézanne's work today, we may find it difficult to resist

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imagining him as the product of a golden age, and in some respects we are not wrong. There was hardly anything that a young artist or writer might not become in late-nineteenth-century Paris, that most wonderfully overcultivated city on earth. And when the strong medicine of the metropolis proved too much, there was Provence, a not-yet-lost world, with its sunbaked houses and allées of slender trees and beautiful wooden tables heaped with apples and onions and bottles of wine. Yet the nineteenth-century situation did not always seem so full of promise for young, independent-minded artists. The painters whom we now revere knew that they were surrounded by artistic decadence, and it was against a backdrop of official hostility and malaise that a man as instinctively cautious as Cézanne found himself becoming such a thoroughgoing radical.

When Cézanne, in what was to become one of his two or three most famous remarks, announced his desire to "revive Poussin through contact with nature," he may well have been aware that Poussin himself had lived in a period in which the old ideals—the ideals of Raphael—were enfeebled. By Cézanne's time the French Academy that had been based on Poussin's discoveries had rotted to the core. But the situation had already been dire in 1765, when Chardin, Cézanne's great predecessor in the art of still life, stood before the Academy and spoke of the hopelessness of the young artists, who "withered for days and nights" before the casts of classical sculpture, which he called "immobile and inanimate nature." And then, Chardin went on, when we students finally graduated to "living nature," all the "preceding years seemed wasted," for we had been "no more at a loss the first time we held a pencil. The eye must be taught to look at nature; and how many have never seen and will never see it! It is the agony of our lives."

Chardin could have been imagining Cézanne's struggles when he observed that "he who has not felt the difficulties of his art does nothing that counts." Chardin chose to mask his own tremendous struggles behind a dazzling illusionism, so that we feel his anxieties only subliminally, in the quivering animation of his delicately colored planes. But with Cézanne, a century later, Chardin's hairline fractures become seismic shifts. (Is it any wonder that Cézanne painted rock formations and quarries?) The difficulty—even the impossibility—of which Chardin had spoken so eloquently was now a painter's cherished theme.

In the 1890s, Cézanne did several still

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lifes in which the primary focus is a plaster cast of a Cupid that in his day was thought to be by the seventeenth-century Aixois sculptor Pierre Puget. In selecting what was basically a beginning student's problem for some of his most refined compositions, Cézanne was saying that an artist is never finished with anything, even the most rudimentary subject. He was saying that all the elements of the old Academic experience—drawing from casts, studying the old masters, life drawing, color theory—had to be mixed up, pursued simultaneously. Looking at one of the still lifes with a Cupid, Cézanne told his young friend Joachim Gasquet that "in a good picture, like the ones I dream about, there's a unity. The drawing and the color are no longer distinct; as one paints, one draws; the more the colors harmonize among themselves, the more precise the drawing becomes." When Cézanne offered this ad hoc treatise on the art of painting while contemplating a study of a plaster cast, he might almost have been imagining himself as a teacher in the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, a school to which he had once applied, probably at the urging of his father, but had not been accepted.

Cézanne's astonishing intentness carries us straight through this retrospective. In the hands of an even slightly less gifted artist, such slowly unfolding work could have an oppressive, grinding intensity; and occasionally Cézanne's nose-always-to-the-grindstone attitude is a bit hard to take. Yet there's a startling poetic grandeur to much of his earnestness. And as he goes on he learns to be playful about his seriousness, so that the overlapping lines and color planes dance. His deliberation can be a rhythmic device, a momentary lowering of energy before he takes the plunge. He's a great adagio painter.

In the still lifes of the 1890s, Cézanne summarizes the full extent and variety of his mature powers. Chardin had already presented more complex internal tensions in a few square feet than most artists can pack into figure paintings of vast dimensions, and Cézanne, by reducing Chardin's *trompe l'oeil* glamour to a modest verisimilitude, only further underscores the potential for dramatic interactions between inanimate actors. A composition such as *Still Life with Curtain and Flowered Pitcher* (c. 1899) has all the heroic onslaught of contending forces that we know from Rubens's biggest compositions.

That this is a painting full of complex inequalities is signaled by the baker's dozen of apples and oranges, which are arranged in groups of five and four and three and one, so that the eye is offered no rest, only a continual weighing of sum against sum. And then there are the two kinds of cloths—or is it three?—for there are actually two white cloths on the table to balance the curtain hanging on the wall. The white cloth on the left is arranged in soft curves, the one to the right in more angled folds. The figured curtain is darkly intricate, with the geometry of the leaf pattern rearranged in thick folds to achieve an effect as complex as a scene by Breughel. And then, as if to mediate between all these conflicting forces, there is the decorated pitcher, white with bits of green and orange and purple—but Cézanne is far too intent on asserting the dazzling autonomy of each part to permit any easy resolution. It's a mysteriously radiant canvas, with the purplish dusk of the upper regions descending on a tabletop as full of colorful whites as newly fallen snow.

Cézanne's purified materialism, self-evident yet paradoxical, was the answer to many a nineteenth-century avant-gardist's prayers. Looking at Cézanne's work, we go back into those dreams and we know that they will not die. Yet we also know that our relationship to his work is hopelessly changed, for by now this artist who provoked upheavals in painting like nothing since the early Renaissance has turned out to be the great conservator. If we are honest about Cézanne, we will admit that our feelings about him can startle us. The paintings are the same, but we stand on the other side of them, so that when we look into his late, evaporating impressions of Mont Sainte-Victoire we see not the glorious openness of the future but a sobering need to reaffirm the verities of the past.

At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Cézanne's work is presented as a peak experience when it really is an essential everyday experience. Once Cézanne ignited the most daring spirits of his day, and now his example is mostly taken to heart in Painting 101. Anybody who begins to paint begins with him, even if his name is barely mentioned, just as when Cézanne was a young man everybody began with Raphael. Cézanne is our Academy. He reclaimed classicism by studying nature, and in so doing invented a new model of artistic continuity. Well before the end of his life, younger artists were anxious to learn all they could about his working methods, and the motifs that he painted, in the Île de France and in Provence, have exerted a strong fascination right down to our own time.

Pavel Machotka, a painter who teaches at Santa Cruz, has just published *Cézanne: Landscape into Art* (Yale), in which he documents a decades-long

Refugees

Bent under burdens which sometimes
can be seen and sometimes can't,
they trudge through mud or desert sands,
hunched, hungry,

silent men in heavy jackets,
dressed for all four seasons,
old women with crumpled faces,
clutching something—a child, the family
lamp, the last loaf of bread?

It could be Bosnia today,
Poland in September '39, France
eight months later, Thuringia in '45,
Somalia, Afghanistan, Egypt.

There's always a wagon or at least a wheelbarrow
full of treasures, (a quilt, a silver cup,
the fading scent of home),
a car out of gas marooned in a ditch,
a horse (soon left behind), snow, a lot of snow,
too much snow, too much sun, too much rain,

and always that distinctive slouch
as if leaning towards another, better planet,
with less ambitious generals,
less snow, less wind, fewer cannons,
less History (alas, there's no
such planet, just that slouch)

Shuffling their feet,
they move slowly, very slowly
toward the country of nowhere,
and the city of no one
on the river of never.

ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI

translated from the Polish
by Clare Cavanagh

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effort to photograph all of Cézanne's surviving sites in color, and see what they can tell us about the artist's powers of transcription and transformation. Machotka, who is glad to credit the pioneering research more than half a century ago by John Rewald and Erle Loran, argues convincingly that we learn much more from photographs of Cézanne's sites than we ever could from photographs of Corot's or Bonnard's. This is because Cézanne's relationship to a motif is built out of so many discrete critical reactions. Machotka's fine color photographs clarify Cézanne's powers of sight, and even when certain motifs that he has rediscovered don't add much to my understanding, I'm caught up in the indefatigable intelligence of this pilgrim. Machotka turns up odd, wonderful facts. "I have learned," he writes of a painting of the forest of Fontainebleau, "that *pin sylvestre* (Scotch pine) is a relatively recent introduction, and that their straight trunks which replaced the twisted oaks were thought by the Barbizon painters to have ruined the landscape. Cézanne was the first to have taken advantage of their shape."

Machotka is inclined to regard Cézanne's landscapes as more closely based on appearances than certain earlier writers who examined the sites. One of his interesting points is that Rewald's and Loran's black-and-white photographs provoke a proto-Cubist reading more readily than his own lush color ones. But the drift toward abstraction in Cézanne is something that nobody, including Machotka, is going to deny, and nowadays even those painters who take their inspiration from Cézanne's most naturalistic work tend to rely on an abstract armature which he invented.

Most of the artists who make up our informal Cézanne Academy have staked everything on the idea that both abstraction and representation are implicit in the act of painting. This thoroughly Cézannesque conception has for more than thirty years been the driving force behind the New York Studio School, which was founded in 1964 by Mercedes Matter, a painter of subtly faceted still lifes who perhaps not coincidentally hails from Philadelphia, where her father, Arthur B. Carles, was a pioneering abstract artist whose work now hangs in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Over the years almost every contemporary painter who has thought deeply about Cézanne has taught at the Studio School. If artists now reaching middle age know their Cézanne, it's generally because they have studied with somebody or at least heard somebody speak at the Studio School. Those teachers include Wilbur Niewald, who for decades ran the legendary painting program at the Kansas City Art Institute, and Andrew Forge, who recently retired from Yale, and Matter herself. As it happens, both Forge and Matter were exhibiting their work in the weeks when Cézanne opened in Philadelphia, and you could see how intently they had embraced Cézanne's idea that the search can be the subject, and how some of Cézanne's impersonality had become an aspect of their personalities. Here was a lesson in continuity—which is perhaps the most fundamental of Cézanne's values.

Mercedes Matter's show this spring was in two parts, her drawings at the Studio School and her paintings at the Salander-O'Reilly Galleries. Although Matter is most frequently praised as a draftsman—it has always been her preferred subject as a teacher—it is her paintings, often based on elaborately architectural arrangements of fruit and dishes and drapery, that I like the best. She really comes into her own when she is handling strong reds and oranges and violets, so that her light, angled strokes of paint achieve a crystalline richness and the laden table lifts up into a wall of fascinating geological encrustations. It's as if a still life were turning into a landscape right before our eyes.

Andrew Forge's work—seen in a retrospective this summer at Yale's Center for British Art, which marked his retirement from the School of Art—does not make quite so overt a reference to Cézanne. But his pointillist technique does evoke Seurat, that other avatar of late nineteenth-century destabilization, and the most poetically complete paintings in the Yale show, a quartet of canvases on forest themes that hung right at the opening, have some of the piquancy of Cézanne's delicate tree trunks. Forge is interested in examining the tiniest intervals, and the gradualism of his work—which probably owes something to his studies with William Coldstream, an English painter with a fine feeling for modestly faceted Cézannesque forms—puts Cézanne's hesitations under the microscope.

Like Machotka's new book on Cézanne, the paintings of Mercedes Matter and Andrew Forge will be described by some as academic; but to declare oneself a member of the Cézanne Academy is to embrace an absolutely modern experience. Matter and Forge take us by the hand and ask us to see what they have seen. They are inveterate learners. They have spent decades in their studios hovering on the brink of total abstraction. And that bespeaks a conservatism

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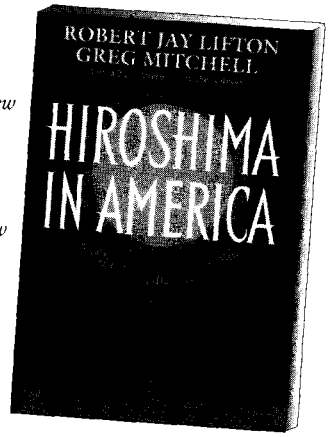

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grounded in the confounding radicalism of Cézanne's final phase.

I'm sure that both Matter and Forge would have perceptive things to say about the last gallery of the Cézanne retrospective, the only really inspired room in the show, where dozens of late drawings and watercolors are hung end-to-end. These painters would probably want to point out that even in his later years Cézanne was still starting from scratch. They would emphasize the deliberation that went into each stroke of the graphite and each dab of watercolor, so that with only a handful of angled lines Cézanne could fill a sheet of paper with light and volume and movement. There's a study of a card player in this gallery which barely covers the paper yet conveys a sense of absolute solidity. Elsewhere, with a few shivering strokes of watercolor, Cézanne plots the farthest horizons of Provence. And in what is practically the final image in the entire show, the *Still Life with Blue Pot* (1900-06), he brings an utterly unexpected, almost strident richness and luminosity to the watercolorist's art.

The entire range of Cézanne's themes is recapitulated on a couple of walls. For a museumgoer who only minutes before stood in front of the overwhelming blue-and-gray dream of the Philadelphia *Bathers*, this last room can bring to mind Poussin's famous reply to a disciple who had asked the old artist how he had accomplished so much: "I have neglected nothing." It is a declaration of almost embarrassing earnestness and egotism, the sort of thing you'd expect to hear from a pedant; but coming from the lips of an artist who has brought a new kind of magic into the world it stays in your mind. Certainly Cézanne neglected nothing. And we are left awestruck. •

Mariner, Renegade and Castaway

BY CARYL PHILLIPS

C.L.R. James: A Political Biography by Kent Worcester

(State University of New York Press, 311 pp., $19.95)

To be born at the dawn of the twentieth century meant that one would come of age between the carnage of two world wars. It was no wonder that the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a global upsurge of revolutionary activities. To the various socialist causes sped individuals of all classes and creeds who preferred to identify foreign countries as crucibles for change rather than to toil in what they imagined to be the shallow, stony soil of their own lands. C.L.R. James was such an itinerant socialist. Yet he differed from the others of his generation in that he viewed politics as inseparable from a concern with culture in general and with literature in particular. He also differed from them in that he never lost sight of "home," though he left his native Trinidad as a young man, nor did he ever lose faith in his own "people" as he circumnavigated the globe in an attempt to stoke the fires of international socialism.

The difficulty with C.L.R. James has always been location. Mentally, too, he was itinerant. He broke ground in the fields of literature, literary criticism, cultural studies, political theory, history and philosophy, and in more than one of these areas he can be looked upon as a pioneer. He was born in Trinidad in 1901 and was laid to rest there in 1989, and between these two certain locations there sprawls a remarkable life and a formidable body of achievement. In a century that has produced talents as diverse as the economist Arthur Lewis, the poets Derek Walcott and Aimé Césaire, and the novelist Alejo Carpentier, there is little doubt that James will come to be regarded as the outstanding Caribbean mind of the twentieth century.

The edifice of his work was constructed on two guiding principles. First, he believed in the power of reason, which was a clear legacy of his classical British education in colonial Trinidad. James's appeal to reason was always accompanied by a reference to, and a scrupulous regard for, history. Second, James believed in the inventive potential of ordinary people when engaged in social action. While he acknowledged the necessity for charismatic leadership (he was blessed with a charismatic personality of his own), James believed that beneficial political change could only emerge when the masses democratically stated their desires.

Kent Worcester calls his study of James "a political biography," which immediately points to a strength and a weakness in the book: a strength inasmuch as the author is flagging his territory and warning us not to expect a full treatment, a weakness in that it distills politics out from the welter of a life made rich by unexpected syntheses across various disciplines. James was a political trailblazer, but his world was undeniably larger and more complex than politics. Worcester's book attends to the details of James's political development, but it is at times perfunctory with regard to the other elements of James's long and extraordinary life.

The rich complexities of the life of this great man of the diaspora are only hinted at by Worcester. It is interesting to learn that this writer who produced thousands of pages of books and letters suffered great physical pain when he wrote; but this fact is never expanded upon. In *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (1953), James described his attempts to discipline mind and body and write while suffering the debilitating effects of a duodenal ulcer that had troubled him since he was a child; but a reader of Worcester's book might be forgiven for assuming that the only impediment to this man of letters was time. In fact, James was dogged with fragile health and lived continually on the edge of penury.

As for the details of James's personal life, we are given little. There are marriages, divorces and even the birth of a child, but all are subsumed behind the political work, as though the life and the work bear no relation to each other. In fact, crucial information about James's personal life is often presented as a mere coda to the news of the appearance of another book or pamphlet: "Its completion [*American Civilization*] was further complicated by the fact that Constance and C.L.R. had a son, C.L.R. James Jr. ('Nobby'), in April 1949, a happy event which nevertheless exacerbated his longstanding financial anxieties...." This is the first and the last we hear of James's son.

Cyril Lionel Robert James was born in the village of Caroni, Trinidad, on January 4, 1901. He was the eldest child of Robert James, a schoolteacher, and Ida Elizabeth (Bessie) James, a devout Anglican who read widely in books and magazines. Bessie would read anything that she could lay her hands upon, and as soon as she finished with a book her eldest son picked it up and read it for himself. She developed a particular fondness for Kipling, Austen, Trollope, the Brontës and Dickens, a fondness inherited by her son.

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In 1910 James won a scholarship, or "exhibition," to Trinidad's first secondary school, the august Queen's Royal College. Opened in 1870, the college's "expatriate" masters were generally Oxford- and Cambridge-educated men who taught a staple diet of classics which centered on Latin, Greek and ancient history. James was an assiduous student to whom good grades and high praise came easily. But by the age of 14 the quirky, idiosyncratic nature of his personality had begun to display itself. He found solace reading in class rather than listening to his schoolmasters, and after school he preferred to play cricket (a sport at which he was only proficient) rather than attending to his schoolwork. By this stage of his life he could claim to have read Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* at least a dozen times. It became his "key text." He took particular delight in the satirical manner in which Thackeray exposed the pretentions of middle-class British society; and he must have recognized the self-aggrandizements and the frustrations of middle-class Trinidadian life in the British writer's work. He would delight friends by having them open the book at any page and start to read, at which point he would take over, quoting from memory.

The Trinidad of the early part of the century was essentially British, politically and culturally. Like the rest of the Caribbean, it lay at that peculiar crossroads where Europe, the Western hemisphere, Africa and the indigenous world of the Carib and Arawak Indians came together in a chaotic rush. It was a world which, compared to Britain, and certainly to the United States, was free of the cruder forms of racial prejudice. Many years later, in *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), James recalled about his school days that "in our little Eden" racial discrimination "never troubled us." In a later passage he reflects upon his being denied admission on racial grounds into the local English regiment, but claims that this incident left him unscarred.

James's lifelong lack of interest in addressing questions of race in a one-dimensional manner was owed to his Caribbean upbringing. Growing up in a British environment, albeit in a colony, the child of empire soon comes to understand the relationship between race and class, to see how, in certain situations, a failure to grapple with class makes it impossible to tackle questions of race. The self-confident "colonial" bearing of James was always a challenge to those beyond the Caribbean who wished to reduce him, owing not least to his dark complexion, to a mere commentator on race. When, some years later, he spoke in the United States, his future wife, Constance Webb, was in the audience, and she noted how James's "deracinated" presence seemed to confuse some of those present: "Very few, if any comrades in Los Angeles, in 1939, had met anyone from the West Indies. C.L.R. was a man beyond their understanding—a middle-class Englishman, straight out of Thackeray. And they had never heard a black man speak with such authority and grace ... some of the comrades told him: 'You don't act like a black man.' "

James's academic career was a disappointment to his parents, who had hoped it might lead to one of the professions open to black men, such as the church or medicine. But James left school and followed in his father's footsteps, taking the first tentative steps along the path of becoming a schoolteacher. For a while he earned his living at Queen's Royal College, but teaching was not a vocation about which he felt deeply. It provided him with a living and the ability to indulge his twin passions, cricket and literature.

It was not only the competitiveness of cricket that exercised James. The rules of the game, at once aesthetic and social, held him spellbound, and he began to write passionately on the subject. His one extant poem, "Pascall Bowled," a tribute to a legendary Trinidadian cricketer, Victor Pascall, dates from this period. The poem imagines how Pascall might have performed if matched against the best that England could send out to bat.

> And when to England back they reach
> And tread the sands of Dover's beach,
> And people crowd around to know
> The reason for their wretched show,
> A tear will shine in Hendren's eye,
> Jack Hearne will heave a bitter sigh,
> And Hobbs will shake his head and cry,
> "Well, friends, we made a decent try,
> Armstrong and Bardsley, Hearne and I,"
> But—Pascall bowled.

Yet it was as a writer, not as a cricketer, that James first came to public attention. He co-founded and edited two of the Caribbean's pioneering literary journals, *Trinidad* (1929-30) and *The Beacon* (1931-33). As a young man in his 20s, he wrote and published short stories and a number of essays on history and philosophy, as well as most of a novel called *Minty Alley* that would be published in 1936. James's early short stories are characterized by an unsentimental concern with the life of the working-class poor of Trinidad. These stories do not resort to rhetorical flourishes in form or narra-

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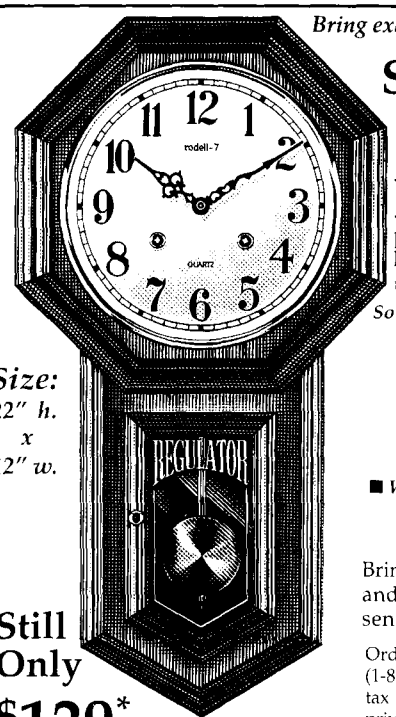

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tive technique. *Minty Alley* marked a forward development. In this novel James explored the relationship between the educated black Trinidadians (such as himself) and the uneducated; and he did so by embracing the Trinidadian vernacular as the language of his novel, as opposed to the usual imitations of Metropolitan English. James's dialogue in this book provided his successors, most notably V.S. Naipaul, with a model for a true treatment of this material:

> "You have cigarettes?"
> "No," said Haynes, feeling his pocket. Benoit asked him to get some.
> "Let's have another beer."
> "Yes, man. Liquor is helpful."

When, in 1932, it became possible for James to leave Trinidad and travel to England, to meet up with his old friend the cricketer Learie Constantine, he effectively ended his career as a writer of fiction. He may well have written more and finer novels, but he was still developing as an intellectual, and he fully understood the centrality of the British and European high culture which underscored his colonial education. As he observed in *Beyond a Boundary*, "In March 1932 I boarded the boat for Plymouth. I was about to enter the arena where I was to play the role for which I had prepared myself. The British intellectual was going to Britain." It would be twenty-six years before James returned to the country of his birth.

The next six years brought a remarkable transformation, as he forced himself beyond the world of Thackeray and into the world of Marx. He settled in Nelson, Lancashire, a town in which Constantine was playing cricket, and a place known as "Little Moscow" owing to the left-wing sympathies of its inhabitants. He soon gained a reputation as a man prepared to grapple with the intricacies of Marxism. He read, and was greatly impressed by, Trotsky's *A History of the Russian Revolution*, and in 1934 he joined the Trotskyist Marxist Group within the Independent Labour Party, and promptly denounced Stalin.

At the same time he was busy with research, in French and English, on the life of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the origins of the San Domingo slave revolution. These labors resulted, in 1938, in *The Black Jacobins*, a Marxist analysis of the Haitian slave rebellion. The book was immediately recognized as a masterpiece, and it has had a profound effect upon the way in which scholars and politicians have viewed colonial struggles in Africa and in the diaspora. Among its more radical challenges was James's invitation to view issues relating to race in their proper perspective:

C.L.R. JAMES BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

> The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental.

The Black Jacobins painted an unforgettably vivid portrait of its extraordinary subject. It was also the book that put forward the idea that the abolition of slavery in the British Empire was not motivated by strictly philanthropic reasons. The increasingly serious financial strain of trying to control the slaves meant that inevitably the British would have to stanch the loss of money and lives that was being expended trying to maintain this moribund system. As James pointed out, slave owners could often not even afford to feed their "property." "The ration was so small and given to them so irregularly that often the last half of the week found them with nothing." In 1949, a little over a decade after James's book appeared, Eric Williams, formerly a student of James's at Queen's Royal College and soon to be prime minister of Trinidad, published *Capitalism and Slavery*, originally his doctoral dissertation at Oxford, which dealt the death-blow to any idea that there was not a strictly commercial rationale behind this act of decency; but Williams freely admitted that the chapter in James's book titled "The Owners," in which James makes a full-frontal attack on what he terms that "venal race of scholars, profiteering panderers to national vanity, [who] have conspired to obscure the truth about abolition," provided him with the blueprint for his work.

It was not only in this area of historical reinterpretation that the *The Black Jacobins* startled its readership. James's analysis of the nature of servile revolt had far-reaching consequences in the struggles for independence that soon erupted in Africa and the Caribbean. For James had made it clear that black emancipation was always to be viewed as an integral part of wider historical changes. An extremely favorable review of *The Black Jacobins* in 1938 in *The New York Times* recognized the originality of James's approach: "'It is impossible to understand the San Domingo revolution unless it is studied in close relationship with the revolution in France,' Mr. James remarks almost casually in the course of his six-page bibliography." By viewing the San Domingo rebellion in the context of the French Revolution, James forced his readers to rethink not only the past but also the present.

Indeed, the work that *The Black Jacobins* most clearly complements is W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935), which also looked to rescue indepen-

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dent black radical thought from being divorced from, or buried beneath, the prevailing historical forces. The unforgettable conclusion of *The Black Jacobins* suggests how important the book was for an African world which could glimpse, at last, the distant prospect of self-determination. "Finally those black Haitian labourers and the Mulattos have given us an example to study," James wrote. "Despite the temporary reaction of Fascism, the prevailing standards of human liberty and equality are infinitely more advanced and more profound than those current in 1789. Judged relatively by these standards, the millions of blacks in Africa ... are as much pariahs in that vast prison as the blacks and Mulattos of San Domingo in the eighteenth century. The imperialists envisage an eternity of African exploitation: the African is backward, ignorant.... They dream dreams.... The Blacks of Africa are more advanced, nearer ready than were the slaves of San Domingo."

In an interview many years later, James reflected upon his departure from Trinidad in 1932: "I arrived in England intending to make my way in the world as a writer of fiction, but the world went political and I went with it." Interwar England was the hub of pan-African thought and activity, and James was refining his theoretical understanding of Marxism at the same time as he was becoming involved in the nascent movement for decolonization. He fell in with Jomo Kenyatta and T. Ras Makonnen (the latter was the alias of the British Guianan pan-African leader George Griffity), and together with others, including his fellow Trinidadian George Padmore, they formed pressure groups and intellectual bureaus (which they defined as "clearing house[s] of information" which could supply "speakers to organizations [and] convene meetings and discussions") to organize in a militant fashion against the colonial fascism that they saw all around them. But it was James's increasing sympathies for Trotskyism that were the most important aspect of his intellectual growth in this period, and his fascination with the Trotskyite school of thought resulted in his eventual departure from England. He set sail for New York in 1938, with every intention of returning to London in the spring of 1939 for the cricket season.

He was leaving England with a quite staggering list of achievements. In 1932 he had published *The Life of Captain Cipriani: An Account of British Government in the West Indies*, and in the following year Leonard Woolf, of Bloomsbury fame, had published an abridged version of the book as *The Case for West-Indian Self-Government*. In 1932 there also appeared Learie Constantine's autobiography, *Cricket and I*, which James was largely responsible for writing. Soon after, James found himself employed as a cricket correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, traveling the length and breadth of England. In 1936 *Minty Alley* was finally published, and in the same year his play *Toussaint L'Ouverture* opened in London's West End, with Paul Robeson in the lead role. In 1937, he published *World Revolution: 1917-1936*. In the following year he began to edit the journal *International African Opinion*. In 1938 he published his translation from the French of Boris Souvarine's massive and devastating *Stalin* as well as *The Black Jacobins*, and 1939 saw the appearance of *History of Negro Revolt*.

He had left Trinidad a man of letters, but he was leaving England six years later one of the foremost political thinkers and historians of his age. His reason for moving on was Trotsky. He had become interested in having James supervise the "Negro" work of the Socialist Worker's Party in the United States. The idea was that James might help to recruit black people from all strata of society. Trotsky had read James's "orthodox" *World Revolution: 1917-1936*; and while not in agreement with every aspect of the book, he recognized in James a uniquely gifted individual. The thesis of James's book was that Stalin had chosen to rely upon the Party bureaucracy to carry out the "interests" of the Russian state, while Lenin had largely relied upon the powers of the mobilized masses. The formation of a new power base in the state bureaucracy itself was not yet viewed by James as a "logical" development of Soviet Communism. But exposure to America, and the opportunity to meet Trotsky, would further "radicalize" his thinking.

Almost immediately upon his arrival in the United States, James was seduced by what he perceived to be the vast and untapped revolutionary potential of the dynamic young nation. He completed a coast-to-coast speaking tour on behalf of the American Socialist Worker's Party, then traveled south to Mexico, where he spent some weeks with Trotsky discussing the desirability of developing a separate black movement within the party. James saw no need for this. He staunchly defended the rights of black people to struggle for equality independently, outside of the party; and he reminded Trotsky and others that it was the responsibility of the party to respect the unique nature of the black struggle. Despite their differences, James left Mexico with a profound respect for Trotsky, and a year later, shortly after Trotsky's assassination, he remembered his friend:

> To appreciate his powers and his past, the enormous force of this many-sided and yet perfectly integrated personality, and to see him listening patiently to some inexperienced comrade putting forward his inexperienced ideas, to read letters in which he took up some apparently minor point and elaborated it meeting all possible objections one by one, was to have a great lesson in the difference between the superficial arrogance which often characterizes essentially sensitive men, and the ocean of strength, patience and resiliency which can come from complete devotion to a cause.

On his return to the United States, James was recognized by the leaders of the various Trotskyite organizations as an intellectual who could inject new life into a movement that was bogged down in sectarian disputes around the vexing "Russian question." War had just been declared in Europe and a return to England was unlikely, so James threw himself into his work for the SWP, becoming a prolific pamphleteer and speaker. James's contact with black America, and his pronouncements upon it, forced a new debate on "the Negro question" in Marxist circles.

Even as James became increasingly interested in the radical promise of black America, he guarded against black nationalism. Against the Marxists, James insisted on the autonomy of the black struggle and its compatibility with their own, but against the black nationalists he insisted that they see their struggle in the context of other like-minded struggles. The fact that Marcus Garvey could not, or would not, do so resulted in a series of pronouncements on Garvey which could be shockingly hostile, such as this one: "Garvey, however, was a race fanatic. His appeal was to black against white. He wanted purity of race. A great part of his propaganda was based on the past achievements of blacks.... With that disregard of facts which characterizes the born demagogue, he proclaimed that there were 400 million Negroes in the world, when there are certainly not half as many. What does this remind us of? Who but Adolf Hitler?"

James fell deeply in love with the United States. His fifteen-year sojourn in the country, between 1938 and 1953, was characterized by his zealous attempts to match his own politics to the unique nature of the political culture that he discovered. He became the leader of a Trotskyite sect, the "Johnson-Forest Tendency" (J.R. Johnson was his pseudonym as a pamphleteer), and with this small group of like-minded theorists James

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tried to develop a form of Marxism that was applicable to the United States. By the late 1940s his political and intellectual evolution had reached the stage where he had decided to reject his earlier conception of building a "small mass party" and to emphasize instead the capacity of the masses for independent mobilization.

Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin (1948), a volume based upon letters from James to other members of the Johnson-Forest Tendency and distributed among them, argued that Trotsky and his followers had underestimated the importance of the Hegelian dialectic in favor of the construction of more pragmatic methods by which they might "Bolshevize" America. Hegel's writings provided the Johnson-Forest Tendency with its language and its philosophical direction, which insisted upon a study of historical patterns and a more structured approach to dealing with the realities of modern capitalism. Thinking his way beyond Trotsky, James began to develop a strategy for building a revolutionary party in an advanced capitalist society: he envisioned socialists working together with other social movements, as opposed to forming monolithic vanguard parties. In some ways he anticipated the social unrest that came later with the civil rights movement and the campus protests of the 1960s.

James's brand of Marxism was shrewd in its appreciation of the conservative nature of American political culture, but it was wildly optimistic in its analysis of the revolutionary zeal of the American people. One suspects that the increasingly theory-soaked Johnson-Forest Tendency would have fallen into political disrepair much sooner than it did, in the 1950s, had it not been for James's attachment to popular culture. This managed to keep the faction grounded in something approximating reality. During his fifteen years in the United States, James produced, along with countless articles and papers on politics, a sizable body of cultural criticism. In his cultural writing he was often brilliantly accurate, as in his observation of Richard Wright's work and talent. It was James who first praised his younger friend's abilities and then warned him that his fiction would be "blighted" if he continued to participate in the activities of the Communist Party. As James put it, "the artist in uniform soon ceases to be an artist."

While continuing to proclaim his faith in the revolutionary potential of the American masses, James always believed wholeheartedly in the individuality of the artist, and he justified his belief in the importance of the artist by insisting that art offered an avenue of access into the minds of the people. Yet his belief in the political utility of art—his notion that art reflected the inner desires of the masses and would help to lead them to the barricades—resulted in some less than trenchant observations. To wit: "To put it more harshly still, it is in the serious study of, above all, Charles Chaplin, Dick Tracy, Gasoline Alley, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, Rita Hayworth, Humphrey Bogart, genuinely popular novels like those of Frank Yerby (*The Foxes of Harrow, The Golden Hawk, The Vixen, Pride's Castle*), men like David Selznick, Cecil B. de Mille, and Henry Luce, that you find the clearest ideological expression of the sentiments and deepest feelings of the American people and a great window into the future of America and the modern world." In truth, a "serious study" of Hollywood was likely to teach more about the cultural expressions of capitalism than about the "deepest feeling of the American people."

As brilliant as James could be in cultural criticism, the driving force behind his work in this period was his concern for reconstructing Marxism in the United States, and this passion was likely to distort his judgment in other fields. At one point in the '40s, Richard Wright suggested to Ralph Ellison and James that together they produce a book called *The Negro Speaks*. Such a book would have had an important influence on American thinking about race, but James preferred to write for the SWP paper *Labor Action*, which was distributed free at factory gates.

As the '40s gave way to the '50s, James found himself in a quandary. He continued to believe in his political creed, but he had to acknowledge that he was toiling in the political somnolence of Eisenhower's America. His political "tendency" was beginning to divide along ideological lines. (Worcester is wrong to suggest that "of his various collaborative ventures, Johnson-Forest was the longest running and in certain respects the most fruitful.") His health was beginning to fail him. And then, in 1952, he was arrested for "passport violations" and interned for six months on Ellis Island.

While waiting to see if his application for American citizenship would be accepted, James wrote *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (1953), a study of Melville. This short work of literary criticism offers a particular focus on *Moby Dick*, seeing Ahab as the embodiment of the totalitarian impulse behind capitalism's hunger for conquest and exploitation. In James's essentially political and moral reading, the "renegade" Ahab loses his soul as he seeks to dominate man and nature. This book, in its engagement with, and profound respect for, American literature, was intended to bolster James's case for American citizenship; but in the fall of 1953 he was ordered to leave the country, and he set sail for England.

In later years James was to look back upon this period of his political life with disappointment. Despite his abiding affection for the United States, the country had defeated him in its refusal to rally behind his cry for world revolution. Much of his energy had been expended upon developing as fine a command of theoretical Marxism as any political thinker in the world, yet in doing so he had found himself addressing a severely limited section of the population, in a vocabulary that was technical and exclusive. A decade later, in December 1962, James reminisced to Martin Glaberman, one of his American political allies, about his fifteen-year sojourn in the United States: "It is perhaps the only thing in my life on which I look back not so much with bitterness, but with regret, with recognition of the fact that I wasted my strength, my time and my physical health on something that was absolutely useless."

Between 1953 and 1958, he was based in London. From that vantage point he was able to follow the decline and then the collapse of his political work in the United States, as his former colleagues squabbled among themselves and split into even smaller factions. But he was finding satisfaction elsewhere. Some of his pan-Africanist work of the '30s was now beginning to pay off, as the Gold Coast became the newly independent country of Ghana in 1957 and back home in the Caribbean there was talk of independence and of a federation among the English-speaking islands. In 1958, at the invitation of Eric Williams, the soon-to-be prime minister of Trinidad, James returned to his native Trinidad to edit the political weekly of William's People's National Movement Party.

James changed the title of the paper to *The Nation* and opened it up to national debate. But he had been away from his country for a quarter of a century, and after his long intellectual and political journey he found it difficult to deal with the insularity of Trinidad. He was insisting that the Caribbean region should identify with pan-African struggles for emancipation, but the newly formed West Indian Federation was already collapsing.

He had arrived in Trinidad fully aware

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that the Caribbean society of the 1950s was not revolutionary, that nationalism was clearly the most urgent issue on the agenda. Although he had no intention of abandoning his Marxism, he was also keen to take part in a regional struggle to identify a specifically Caribbean culture and sense of self. *Modern Politics* (1960) and *Party Politics in the West Indies* (1962) addressed the difficult issues facing the young nation states of the Caribbean, urging them to rally to the sides of their emerging artists such as V.S. Naipaul and George Lamming and honor them as providers of a mirror into which Caribbean people could clearly view their lives being played out on the stage of the world.

James felt that the peoples of the Caribbean might be stirred to action only if they could first identify, and then be proud of, their culture, high and low. In a lecture delivered as early as 1959, he got to the heart of the problem:

> In the Caribbean there are many things that are denied to us and will be denied to us for a long time to come. But the production of a supreme artist and all that he or she can give to us (including what lesser artists will gain), that we need not despair of.... Let us create the conditions under which the artist can flourish. But to do that, we must have the consciousness that the nation which we are hoping to build, as much as it needs the pooling of resources and the industrialization and a higher productivity of labor, needs also the supreme artist.

But James underestimated the reactionary lassitude that permeated the Caribbean middle classes. Though he was scornful of purely Afrocentric conceptions of West Indian identity, and preferred to stress the classical Greek and modern European influence in art, politics, culture and morality, James was perceived by large elements of the middle class as a firebrand. His view of the modern Caribbean as an outgrowth of the international capitalist economy, its cultural and historical uniqueness notwithstanding, disturbed many middle-class Caribbean people who, on the threshold of political independence, were fearful of the mobilization of the poor and the working class.

Some ten years later, in 1973, James reflected on the intellectual bankruptcy of the West Indian middle class: "I do not know any social class which lives so completely without ideas of any kind. They live entirely on the material plane. In a published address, Sir Robert Kirkwood quotes Vidia Naipaul, who has said of them that they seem to aim at nothing more than being second-rate American

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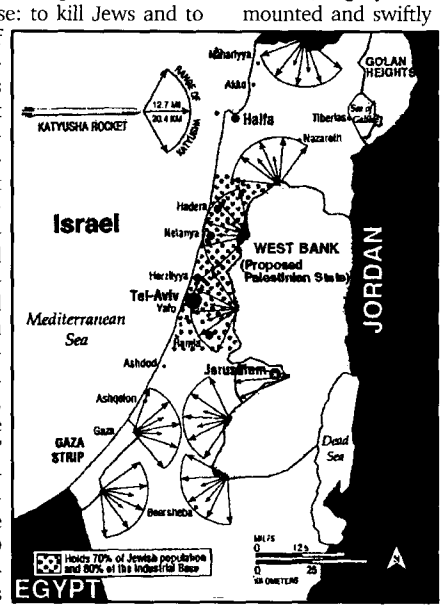
Even those most sanguine about the current peace negotiations are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be founded should be demilitarized. A demilitarized "West Bank" and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would do away with any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is at peace with Egypt and with Jordan. But Israel is confronted by deadly enemies. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO, is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly levelheaded as the previous government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with them. Not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. Despite statements to the contrary, the PLO has still not complied with Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clauses in its "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages".



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it. But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and swiftly mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders, which would be increased from 40 miles in length to over 200 miles—they would rain destruction over most of Israel—covering in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs danced on the roofs of their houses when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel. But one can expect that the new leaders of Israel clearly understand this danger and that they will not make concessions that will endanger the security of their country.

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citizens. It is much more than that. They aim at nothing. Government jobs and the opportunities which association with the government gives allow them the possibility of accumulating material goods. That is all." Inevitably James's "radicalism" brought him into conflict with his old friend and pupil Williams, and so James, now in his '60s, again left Trinidad, only a few days before the country's independence.

That James went unheeded at this critical moment in twentieth-century Caribbean history may prove to be one of the region's most momentous mistakes. Soon after his departure, the islands were swiftly exchanging the colonial yoke of British imperialism for the neocolonial yoke of mass tourism, and the more fully developed colonial yoke of trading "agreements" and political "assistance" from North America. There has been no sustained Caribbean effort to create an independent world in literature, politics or music, despite the fact that the Caribbean has produced extraordinary artists and writers.

James understood, as he said in a speech at the University of the West Indies in the '60s, that it was only by the assiduous development of a "national consciousness" that Caribbean people would be able to transcend "this matter of shallow roots." He also understood—and cited the Greek city-state and Ibsen's Norway as precedents—that size was no impediment to significance. For him, it was essential that the Caribbean embrace its great artists such as Wilson Harris, the Guyanese writer, the calypsonian The Mighty Sparrow, and of course Frank Worrell, Gary Sobers and countless other cricketers, and celebrate the uniqueness of their talent. But while James was busily providing the intellectual platform upon which a genuinely independent Caribbean future might be built, politicians were already festooning themselves with titles, looking askance at their neighbors, and emptying their national treasuries, in a pantomime of stupidity that eventually resulted in the unsavory sight of Caribbean politicians urging Ronald Reagan to invade one of their neighbors.

James returned to England in 1962, to complete and to publish the brilliant book that would become his epitaph. *Beyond A Boundary* appeared in 1963. It is part memoir and part sports book, a very personal book about cricket, but it is really an attempt by James to define the world of politics and the world of art. The great triumph of *Beyond A Boundary* is its ability to rise above genre and in its very form explore the complex nature of colonial West Indian society. It accomplished this by placing at its allegorical heart the most quintessentially English of games. James admired cricket because it was a great team sport and a great individual sport: the game allowed for sudden savage onslaughts of batting or bowling, and suddenly it could turn and demand that the individual subordinate himself to the collectivity. This "moral" game, he maintained, mirrored the unpredictability of life, in that it was both personal and social, highly formal yet open to abuse. As Derek Walcott pointed out in 1984, "he [James] loves cricket above everything else, not because it is a sport, but because he has found in it all the decencies required for a culture."

James had an extraordinary ability to write about sport in a way that linked it to other avenues of life concretely and provocatively. In this way he promoted not only our understanding of the game but also our understanding of the culture. When speaking of George Headley, the great West Indian batsman, he is as likely to compare him to Napoleon as he is to other practitioners of the cricketer's "art." James remembers something from his reading in American literature that will help his readers to grasp the nature of Headley's achievement:

> Mark Twain was once a pilot on the Mississippi. The bed of that river is always changing and a man is sounding all the time and calling out the changes. Mark Twain says that a pilot, whether on duty or not, is always hearing these soundings. Even when playing poker his mind registers them automatically and days after uses the latest results when piloting. Great batsmen are the same, they are not like you or me. An experience is automatically registered and henceforth functions as a permanent part of the organism.

In 1965, James returned to Trinidad as a journalist for the London *Times*, to report on an English cricket team tour of the West Indies. Upon his arrival in Trinidad, Eric Williams placed him under house arrest. After an international outcry, James was released and allowed to continue his reporting, but the following year he chose to once more return to his native Trinidad and to fight an election against Williams. James's party, the Workers and Farmers Party, captured a mere 2.8 percent of the vote. Having suffered this electoral indignity, he abandoned Trinidadian politics for good and returned to England.

After 1966 James continued to travel widely between Africa, the Caribbean and Europe, lecturing on politics, cricket, art and popular culture. He was now a truly diasporan man, at home in a Tanzanian village, on British television, in a lecture hall at the University of the West Indies. In many ways his final two decades represent the richest period of his life, as he was consulted by writers, politicians and scholars from all over the world, and extensively republished on both sides of the Atlantic. He was also able to renew his association with the United States, and in the late '60s and '70s he taught for a while as a professor of humanities at Federal City College, now the University of the District of Columbia.

This was a turbulent time in the history of the United States, and James's "colonial" notion of the interdependence of the African diaspora with Western civilization brought him into conflict with those who advocated black nationalism and black separatism. When, in 1969, he found himself lecturing a group of black students and teachers in Washington D.C., he took it upon himself to remind them of exactly where he stood in the contemporary debate. "I am not boasting about black is beautiful.... Please, I don't go in for that. If other people want to, that's their affair, if they say 'Black is beautiful,' 'Black is ugly,' black is whatever they like. I am concerned with historical facts." As always, he appealed to history and to reason. He would have made short work of the politically correct of our day.

The interconnectedness of historical events, and their dependence upon each other, was a principle most fully expressed in *The Black Jacobins*, and by adhering to this principle James was able to put the whole in some order without ever losing sight of the individual. In an interview in London in 1967, he remarked that "what you need in studying any historical subject is you must get some idea of the economic circumstances, you must also get some idea of the political circumstances, and you must get to know the literary circumstances. Only when you know these three, [do] you have some idea of the historical development of the period." When he concluded that one element of a dearly held theory seemed ahistorical or otherwise flawed, James never lacked the courage to tear down the whole structure and begin anew. Thus, in *Facing Reality* (1958), James is clear about his "new" response to Leninism: "It was a particular theory designed to suit a specific stage of working-class development. That stage of society is now past. The theory and the practice that went with it are now an anachronism, and, if persisted in, lead to one form or another of the counter-revolution. The first thing we must do is to purge ourselves of it."

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A few years ago V.S. Naipaul published his strangely compelling "novel" *A Way in the World*, in which there is a character whose biographical details bear an unmistakable similarity to those of James. Like James a product of Queen's Royal College in Trinidad, Naipaul had reviewed *Beyond A Boundary* when it appeared and concluded by stating that the book "gives base and solidity to West Indian literary achievement." In subsequent years Naipaul would seldom be so generous toward James or the Caribbean. James, too, had his quarrels with the Caribbean, but unlike Naipaul he believed in the possibility that its people may achieve at the highest level. Wherever he went, he was always proud to call himself a product of the Caribbean. Naipaul's Caribbean, by contrast, is often intellectually moribund and backward-looking—not the sort of place that could have produced, say, himself.

James is buried in Trinidad, and inscribed upon his tomb is a sentence from *Beyond A Boundary* which nicely epitomizes the tenor of his life:

> Times would pass, old empires would fall and new ones take their place, the relations of countries and the relations of classes had to change, before I discovered that it is not the quality of goods and utility which matter, but movement; not where you are or what you have, but where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there.

His view of the world was essentially generous. While he wished to impress his opinions upon his readers and his listeners, he respected individuals with whom he disagreed, and he saw virtue in work which ran counter to his beliefs. (Paul Robeson remained loyal to Stalin in the '30s, but James maintained a friendship with him and described him as the most remarkable man he had ever met.) He never lost sight of the autonomy of art and literature, never sought to use either for crassly political purposes. "Thackeray, not Marx, bears the heaviest responsibility for me," he wrote in *Beyond A Boundary*. He believed in ideas but he had an even greater faith in people, and this faith in people may have placed a humanizing noose around his political neck.

As we are assaulted by our culture of soundbite, the discursive, restless, curious, annealing intellect of this man is a measure of what we have lost. James knew where he came from and he knew where he was going, as he restlessly quarried his way toward knowledge. In the 1980s, in Thatcher's Britain, he found himself sought out by a new generation of admirers. I was among them. It was to his small room above the offices of *Race Today* in rough Brixton that I went to see him, not long before he died. I recall climbing a couple of flights of stairs and being ushered into his presence by the Jamaican poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. The frail James was watching cricket on television the way others ponder a chessboard. I talked idly, searching for a subject that would claim his attention. Finally I mentioned the possibility of my going to teach in the United States. He turned from the television and looked at me. I asked him, should I go? He looked puzzled. Of course I should go. "A young man must always go to where he can learn."

CARYL PHILLIPS's new novel, *The Nature of Blood*, will be published by Knopf next spring.

Down for the Count

BY RICHARD JENKYNS

Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula by Barbara Belford

(Knopf, 382 pp., $30)

Writers, critics, filmmakers and psychologists have been sinking their teeth into the undead for a century now. Small wonder that they can get no rest. According to Barbara Belford, Dracula is the most filmed character in history after Sherlock Holmes, though Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde cannot be far behind. How curious it is that all these fantasies (and one could add *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) should spring from the same age and be centered upon the same city. Late-Victorian London has joined Troy, Camelot, Byzantium and the Rhine as one of the mythic places of the Western imagination.

It is because he wrote *Dracula* that Bram Stoker has earned himself another biography. Without that book, his name would have been forgotten. As it happens, however, he has another claim upon our interest. He was for most of his career the manager of Sir Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre, and thus a part of the history of the Victorian stage. So Belford has two main strands to her story: vampires and the acting world.

Bram Stoker was born in 1847—he was christened Abraham, but adopted the abbreviation early in his adult life—into the prosperous professional class of Protestant Anglo-Irish Dublin. After a successful undergraduate career at Trinity College, he followed his father into the civil service, and he was still employed there when he wrote *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* (1879), the first of his eighteen books. But he was stagestruck, haunting theaters and writing drama reviews, unpaid, for the *Dublin Evening Mail*. Stoker got to know Irving on his visits to Dublin, and when the great man offered him a job, he joyfully abandoned Ireland and the office stool for good. "London in view!" he wrote in his diary, a fortnight after his thirtieth birthday. For the rest of his life he would be part of the metropolitan world.

The story of Irving and the Lyceum has been told before, but Belford tells it well. Her descriptive passages show her at her best. She has an especially keen nose for smells: the aroma of polished brass and oiled wood in the lobby of the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin and the fragrances of the local theater, "the pungent odors mixing with the redolent; the mildewed velvet curtains, the chalky face powder, the vinegary fish suppers, the pomades of jonquil and jasmine." Perhaps she is imagining some of this, but it is well imagined. She brings to life the subfusc splendor of Irving's rooms, a blend of swagger and religiosity, and the new decor with which he and Stoker transformed the Lyceum, the peacock hues, the ceiling in pale blue and gold, the scallop-shaped shields that masked the footlights, the gaslight in wine-colored shades flickering across the gilt moldings.

Her treatment of Stoker himself is much less persuasive. When a man is famous for one thing, the temptation for the biographer is to make that one thing the center of his life and experience, though in reality it may not have been so. This temptation is not resisted. Belford decides that *Dracula* is rich in autobiographical significance. Her main idea

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is that Dracula himself is a caricature of Henry Irving, with whom Stoker had made a "Faustian pact." "A close relationship between any two people, in fact," she explains, "almost always involves vampiric exploitation." It is a gloomy claim, which, even if it were not deeply untrue, would be so general as to be near useless.

Another time she suggests that it is Stoker who is the vampire. Indeed, almost anything is grist to her mill. The birth of a younger brother at home (the usual practice in the nineteenth century) might have disturbed him as a child, she suggests, and stimulated some of the images in his novels. Even the unremarkable fact that Dublin was not entirely new is called in aid: its surviving Georgian buildings were "an example of the survival of the past at the expense of the present—the very essence of vampirism." What would she say of Paris or Rome?

There seems to be nothing in any of this, and some of it is a little absurd. Belford produces no evidence to indicate that Stoker resented Irving, or felt him to be a bloodsucker. On the contrary, he seems to have been proud of the association, to have found his natural metier, and to have enjoyed doing a job which he knew he did well. "A dominant Stokerian literary leitmotif," Belford writes, "is ritual, which he carried over into his work at the Lyceum. He made lists and devised schedules...." In other words, he was a competent administrator. To see good business practice reflected in the gothic rites of Transylvania is imaginative, but it is not sensible.

The reality must surely be that we cannot know very much about what Stoker was like in his private life. Belford in effect concedes this. He was "not an obliging person to think about.... He frustrated intimate probing; his reticence was monumental." Belford's unintended portrait of herself as one of those hearty, persistent people who is sure that we are going to be terribly good friends has a certain charm, but it is too dramatic. Few people keep intimate diaries once they are past their adolescence, and still fewer have reason to leave the kind of trail that the biographer naturally hopes to find. There seem to be no good grounds to think that Stoker was secretive.

Stoker did not invent the vampire myth. Belford mentions but says very little about such predecessors as John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), James Rymer's *Varney the Vampire* (1847) and Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872). Yet any plausible attempt to read autobiography or significant personal expression into *Dracula* would need to start from here. On the face of it, Stoker's book is one more gothic horror romance, better than many but not vastly different from other works in the same genre. If we are to believe that he put the whole of his being into it, we shall need to know how he transformed the material that he inherited.

But may it not be a mistake to make too much of *Dracula*? It is by far the most famous of such stories, but perhaps Stoker was to some extent just lucky. For the truth is that *Dracula* is not a very good book. It does have strengths: considerable verve, a reasonably inventive story, enough sexual symbolism to keep a Freudian happy for a long time. But there are many faults, too. The book is far too long, and inevitably the tension slackens in consequence. From Wilkie Collins's two most famous books, *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*, Stoker borrowed the device of having the story told by several alternating narrators, but he entirely lacks Collins's capacity for ventriloquism: Stoker's voices all sound the same, though Mina simpers a little, so that we know she is a woman. Stoker could not create characters, and his people are alike (except, of course, for the Count) in being remorselessly virtuous. Quincy Adams's spray-on Americanisms and Van Helsing's unconvincing fracturing of the English tongue—which becomes unbearably irritating long before the end—cannot disguise that they are no different from the others. Film treatments may distinguish between Mina and Lucy—the pure maiden and the vamp—but there is next to nothing in the text to give color even to this. Each is the good, mild, ineffectual heroine of journeyman Victorian fiction.

The best fantasies have an internal coherence and also—though it may sound portentous to say this—a kind of moral meaning. It is here that *Dracula* fails most conspicuously. To put it in slightly anachronistic terms, Stoker cannot decide whether he is writing science fiction or magic. Stories such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Time Machine* describe flagrant impossibilities, but once we have connived in the initial suspension of disbelief, they have a kind of logic: the science is pseudo-science, but it is at least consistently maintained.

Stoker is not so disciplined. Sometimes Dracula is bound, like the rest of us, by the constraints of actual life. He has to plan his migration to London carefully, writing letters to solicitors and freight agents, organizing the transport of coffins filled with earth; and here he is at his best, evoking fear by his depiction of a dark, alien and exotic force invading the solid familiar texture of English life, like a moth attacking a broadcloth. (As Belford aptly notes, the book is smartly up to date, with references to such new inventions as the Kodak camera, the portable typewriter and the phonograph recording machine.) At other times, however, Dracula is an occult force of limitless power, who can command the winds and waves to obey him (to mark his arrival in England, he conjures up an immense storm out of nowhere) and transform himself at will into a wolf or a bat—all pure magic.

Van Helsing is supposedly a scientist, using reason to defend good against evil, but to arm himself against the Count he carries with him a consecrated host, which is not exactly a scientific defense. In the masterpieces of suspense narrative—Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Geoffrey Household's *Rogue Male*—the hero is encompassed by enemies whose capacities, though formidable, are pretty exactly defined. We share the hero's fear because we know, quite precisely, what he is up against. But Stoker, having created a figure of apparently irresistible force, has to make his eventual defeat and killing as arbitrary as his powers have been. The result is simply to make the story less exciting.

The Christian coloring, which flickers across the story only intermittently, is at odds with its moral meaninglessness. The Christian idea supposes that men are moral agents, but Stoker's tale reduces them to helpless puppets, since the vampire's bite can transform any of them, whatever their nature, into new vampires in their turn. Quite a few writers of the late nineteenth century, in search of a change from the realism of the mid-Victorian novel, turned to the paranormal or the supernatural. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Turn of the Screw* are pretty dissimilar one from another, but they are alike at least in the ways they explore the dark places of the soul. To turn from any of these to *Dracula* is to feel its lack of psychological drama. This is not to judge the book by inappropriately highbrow criteria or to lament that Stoker was not James. It is rather to suggest that the book is deficient in its own terms, less gripping, less unsettling than it wants to be.

The absence of psychology also makes Dracula a rather uninteresting villain. Compared to Iago, Count Fosco or Svengali—or Ernst Stavro Blofeld—he has no personality. And he has no motives, in the ordinary sense: he bites necks as a fox kills chickens, out of sheer animal

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instinct, because it is what vampires do. Readers who come to the novel after having got to know Dracula through the movies may be surprised at how few his appearances are. But then he has nothing to do except bare his fangs. He is not likely to be a portrait of Irving, because he is not a portrait of anybody.

Ironically, if any element of autobiography is to be found in the book, it is of a more humdrum kind. Dracula has the instincts of an efficient manager: he is seen in his Carpathian castle consulting Bradshaw, the Victorian railway guide, and the business letters that he dispatches to England show him to be remarkably practical for a vampire. And why, after centuries of contentedly sucking the blood of village maidens, does he want to break away from his Transylvanian backwater to make good (or bad) in London? Like his creator, he is a provincial with a hankering for the glamour of the metropolis.

It cannot be said that *Bram Stoker* is a scholarly book. Belford is a professor of journalism, and it shows, for good and for ill. She knows how to keep her narrative moving, and she does not know how to be dull. But her prose, elegant and even evocative when she is describing things, lapses in other places into the style of *Time* magazine thirty or forty years ago. People do not say things, they "huff," "sniff" or "purr" them, and we are even treated to a *Time*-speak inversion: "Added Gilbert, 'I have enjoyed the privilege of Mr. Bram Stoker's friendship for about twenty-five years.' " She enjoys an informal relationship with the English language: she misuses adjectives such as "sagacious," "scabrous" and "ribald," she writes "flout" in place of "flaunt," and when she declares that "Irving found himself an invalid forced to confront his invincibility," she must mean the opposite of what she says. ("Vulnerability" must be the word for which she was groping.)

The book contains also quite a number of mistakes, as well as other things which, while not exactly wrong, are out of key. Belford's history has a faint flavor of *1066 And All That*. Thus, on Gladstone: "A man of peculiar interests, the prime minister loved cutting down trees and rehabilitating prostitutes. . . ." The German nation, for its part, will be surprised to learn that *Faust* is a "weakcript." But the book has a likable zest and warmth, and Belford has the virtue, rare among today's biographers, of knowing the fit length at which to write. On her account *Dracula* contains "seduction, rape, gang rape, group sex, necrophilia, pedophilia, incest, adultery, oral sex, menstruation, venereal disease, and voyeurism." It is, in other words, a good cheerful read, which is what she, in her own way, has also provided.

RICHARD JENKYNS is the author of *Dignity and Decadence: Victorian Art and the Classical Inheritance* (Harvard University Press).

TRB *continued from page 6*

rate of return, Dean Baker of the Economic Policy Institute calculated that when a person who worked for forty-five years at average wage retired in 1994, he and his employer would contribute sixteen years to his income under Social Security. That's about how long he is expected to live.

Lamm also argues that Social Security transfers money from the young to the "rich elderly." He's on only slightly firmer ground here. As Joseph Quinn and Olivia Mitchell of the Social Security Advisory Commission write in *The American Prospect*, Social Security "deliberately transfers resources from those with high lifetime earnings to those with low lifetime earnings." In 1996, monthly earnings up to $437 translated into 90 cents of monthly benefits for each dollar. Earnings between $437 and $2,635 yielded only 32 cents for every dollar, and earnings above that only 15 cents.

Lamm, of course, is not the only person warning that the Social Security system is about to collapse or that the young are being robbed. He is joined by thinktanks and lobbies funded by the Investment Company Institute, the Securities Industries Association and other trade associations eager to make a killing from the system's privatization. But Lamm's hysteria is different from either the profiteers or from his fellow worrywonks. He seems to resent the money and attention old people are receiving.

Lamm has repeatedly displayed a wanton callousness in his remarks about old people that he hasn't shown toward any other group. He became notorious in 1984 for saying terminally-ill old people have "a duty to die and get out of the way with all of our machines and artificial hearts and let the other society, our kids, build a reasonable life." He claimed later he was quoted out of context, but his writings are rife with similar statements, often involving malicious exaggeration. In 1987, he lamented that "thousands of times a day some terminally ill person is brought back to life so that he or she can die tomorrow at great cost to the taxpayer." Lamm also betrays a lack of compassion for the elderly poor, complaining that "programs designed specifically for the poor are being slanted toward the elderly." Medicaid's funding of nursing home care is "symbolic of how our limited resources are being taken away from the majority of the population." Would he prefer to toss the elderly poor out on street?

Lamm is not a stupid man. Many of his policy pronouncements—on trade, immigration, even on aspects of healthcare spending—are worth considering. His views on the aged, however, are not simply ill-founded but unfeeling. He may be attempting to slay sacred cows, but his immediate target is old people in wheelchairs. His candor should not be applauded but jeered.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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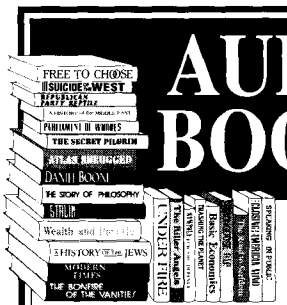

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TEL AVIV DIARIST

Cocoons

MY GRANDMOTHER HAS LIVED IN the same apartment building since 1933, a crumbling stucco palace in southern Tel Aviv. All around her, the ground has shifted: the neighborhood's old park has been crushed under a bus depot. The movie theater down the block has rotted into a heroin den. The other apartments in the building long ago emptied of people to make way for industrial-strength sewing machines. All day they sew retro-wear for Israel's trendy teens, inauthentic copies of the clothes still folded neatly in my grandmother's closet. Despite the constant whirring, her cocoon is undisturbed. Most days she sits on a rocking chair, staring at her sepia-toned wedding picture hung two feet too high. Sequestered in dreamy isolation, she never knew that the man who once rented the room next door was one of Israel's most notorious child molesters, "The Magician," who lured young boys to his lair with the rabbit-in-the-hat trick. When she found out, her contact with the outside world became more hostile. Now, the first thing she does when she steps outside is glare at the prostitute in the nearby alley, sending her sulking away.

IT TURNS OUT SHE'S NOT SO DIFferent from her countryfolk. An Israeli friend pointed out that the recent elections were the most cocooned ever. Arabs voted for the Arab party, Russians for the Russian party, Ashkenazis voted for Labor, and Sephardic Jews, now the majority in Israel, ushered in a victory for Likud. If I told my grandmother she was a Sephardic stereotype, she might feel insulted. Like many Sephardic Jews in Israel, she harbors a streak of self-hatred. The only Likudnik she doesn't like is David Levy, the petulant Moroccan recently named foreign minister. She will wonder out loud why Israel's top emissary speaks no English, and will remind you of the time Levy blackmailed her beloved Bibi. She even knows the latest Levy jokes: Why did Levy tell his wife to pack a bathing suit for his trip to the U.S.? Because someone told him they'd be going to Swan Lake.

BUT SHE DOESN'T MUCH LIKE EUROpeans, either. Her memories of 1948 are all about Her Majesty's hooligan soldiers enforcing the curfew. The soldiers would allow half an hour for shopping and then, just after the women had collected their vegetables, fire shots in the air to send the panicked ladies running, leaving crushed tomatoes on the ground. She retells the story of a baby—distantly related—who wandered onto the apartment balcony past curfew in chase of an errant red ball and was shot dead.

THIS MIX OF ALIENATION FROM Western ways and deep suspicion of Arabs is common to Sephardim. Because they come from Arab countries, they claim a special insight into Israel's enemies that the naïve Ashkenazim lack. Their synagogues were burned in the '40s not by Nazis but by local Arabs, and the memory makes them wary of peace. It's this fear that swept Menachem Begin to power in 1977, and elected Bibi last month. In this spirit of ethnic solidarity my grandmother sends me down to the Sephardic-run open-air market to find out where her people's hearts lie.

DOWN AT THE MARKET, BIBI IS everywhere. Beefy-armed men haul crates of watermelons under his approving eye. Above the rolls of toilet paper are a dozen postcard-size Bibis. Between the stiff lace bras peeks the smirking Bibi, promising everyone "a secure peace." A broken-nosed boy eyes a woman's breasts with dull eyes as he peddles her a bottle of nail polish, and Bibi, with his Mona Lisa smile, seems to wink with encouragement. I ask the fishmonger why he likes Bibi, and with his reeking hands he rips down a poster and plants a big fishy kiss on the cheek of his MIT-educated, American-slang-speaking sweetheart. "He will save us," he says in his twangy Iraqi accent. "I love him."

AFTER THE MARKET, I WENT (WITHout telling my grandmother) to Ramallah, the New York of the new West Bank. I had been to Ramallah once before, just after the intifada began. The transformation is remarkable. Then it was a burned-out hull, its shops boarded up, its streets empty. Now a pile of debris in the road means you've come to a construction site. On every other corner, a new three-story air-conditioned shopping mall is being built. The drilling and banging drowns out ordinary conversation. The little you can hear is usually spoken in perfect salesman's English: "Miss, a new dress for you?" "An Armani suit for the gentleman?" A friend and I spent the afternoon at a pub that serves Taybeh beer, the new Palestinian brand (it's Kosher). The pub is across the street from the Palestinian Council's headquarters, and its members stopped in for drinks between sessions. They talked much more freely than I had expected. Two men were laughing at the front-page picture in both the Palestinian papers that day: a photo of Arafat kissing a baby. Another man spread the gossip about Arafat's temper tantrums, how each time a council member crosses the King, as they mockingly call him, he starts to curse and spit and throw pens around the room.

FOR PALESTINIANS, HOWEVER, things are not as rosy as they seem from the pub. To understand why, go to another pub, this one in Tel Aviv, on the street below my grandmother's house. There on the sidewalk dozens of fair-haired men sit around tables spilling over with empty beer bottles. Their skin is burned, their hands are calloused, their drunken mirth turns quickly hostile. They seem out of place in Israel, and in a way they are. They are Romanian and Polish laborers working on Israeli construction sites—replacement workers for the poorer Palestinians who don't speak English, who are exiled to squalid refugee camps, who don't know what Armani is. Soon after the intifada began, Israel started quietly importing Eastern Europeans, Vietnamese and Filipinos, and more recently it has begun closing off the Gazan border for long stretches. Now the Israelis have discovered there are plenty of people willing to do the Arabs' work, and this may tempt them to keep the border closed forever. So unless oil is found under Gaza, the Gazans are doomed.

OF COURSE, OIL WON'T BE FOUND. I went to Gaza years ago and remember being struck by how barren the place seemed. Drab concrete sheds sit on parched land, baking under the sun. Dark alleys lead to more dark alleys and finally to piles of razor wire or tin sheds. People sit in tea houses and barely move; it's just too hot, and anyway, there's nothing to do. Here, politics is a luxury. "If you ask people what is important, it is [the] closure," a 27-year-old Gazan told *The New York Times*. "Not Jerusalem. Not a Palestinian state. There's not enough food, no medicine. Come to my house—we have more than 16 people living in two rooms." His words are an omen: Gaza is one cocoon that won't remain still.

HANNA ROSIN

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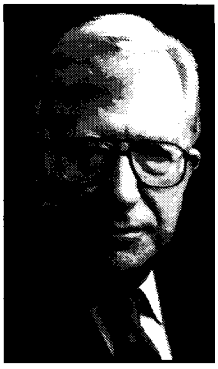
Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A Real Role Model

Camara Barrett sounds like a classic high-achiever. Valedictorian and first in his class when he graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn this spring, he was also class president, editor of the school paper, a peer tutor, and an award-winning public speaker. And he worked 15 hours a week at a Brooklyn medical center, getting experience in one of the fields he is interested in pursuing. So it's no surprise that he got admitted to eight universities and is going to Cornell with a scholarship from the university and another from the United Federation of Teachers, Local 2, of the American Federation of Teachers. The surprise is that he achieved all this while living in a homeless shelter.

Everything seemed fine for Camara when he came to this country from Kingston, Jamaica, several years ago. He was living with his mother and stepfather, taking tough courses and getting top grades at Thomas Jefferson. But after a bitter fight with his parents, he found himself out on the street. For four days, he lived and studied on the subway at night, getting off to go to school during the day.



What makes some kids who face enormous problems fail and a few, like Camara Barrett, succeed?

This would throw most kids for a loop. Even if they're not getting on well with their mothers and fathers, young people depend on parents to provide food and shelter and a certain degree of emotional support and stability. But after people at Thomas Jefferson helped Camara get settled in a homeless shelter, he pulled his grades back up, studied for his SATs, and applied for college admission. Rather than devastating him, the experience of being alone, with nowhere to spend the night but a subway car, seems to have strengthened Camara's resolve to study and make something of himself. Speaking to a *New York Post* reporter about being homeless ("Subway Scholar is on an Honor Roll," May 21, 1996), Camara said that he "was depressed [and] filled with melancholy...[but] what doesn't kill you...makes you stronger and that definitely made me stronger."

How was he able to pull this off? What makes some kids who face enormous problems fail and a few, like Camara Barrett, succeed? Christopher Armstrong, one of the counselors at Independence Inn, the homeless shelter for boys 16 to 21 where Camara spent last year, says that Camara sees a challenge where other people might see obstacles. But this doesn't really explain how he found the guts to meet the challenge.

If he hadn't been able to get off the subway and step into the world of school, would he have made it? I'm not just talking about the people at Thomas Jefferson who helped him through the crisis—though they were important. We always used to think of education as the salvation of poor kids who wanted to rise above their poverty. It prepared them to make a better living than their parents. But, more than that, going to school and studying math, learning about American history, reading books by Dickens and Shakespeare, and perhaps even seeing some Shakespeare plays—all these experiences took you out of your immediate circumstances and connected you with a world that was much larger. That seems to be what Camara is talking about in the scholarship essay he submitted to the United Federation of Teachers. He says that, even when he was a boy growing up on the streets of Kingston, surrounded by ugliness and poverty, he was able to lose himself in television and books.

Americans have always believed that somebody can start with little, overcome terrific odds, and succeed. So Camara's is an American story. It's also a story that poor, minority kids especially need to hear—the ones who look at the difficulties in their lives and say, "Why bother?" I wonder what would happen if those sporting-goods and soft-drink companies whose ads feature huge color photos of movie stars and sports heroes started using heroes like Camara Barrett as their poster boys. What would the effect be if every day poor, minority kids could see a three-story-high photograph of Camara Barrett? Now there's a real role model.

In my recent discussion of an article on student turnover in Chicago ("Caught in a Revolving Door," July 15 & 20, 1996), I should have noted that the article was an adaptation. The original article appeared in *Catalyst*, a news magazine that often covers education issues in Chicago. Readers wanting a copy of the original article, together with the package of articles on student turnover of which it was a part, should send $3 to *Catalyst* at 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60604 (phone 312-427-4830; fax 312- 427-6130).

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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